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NEWSZINE

APRIL

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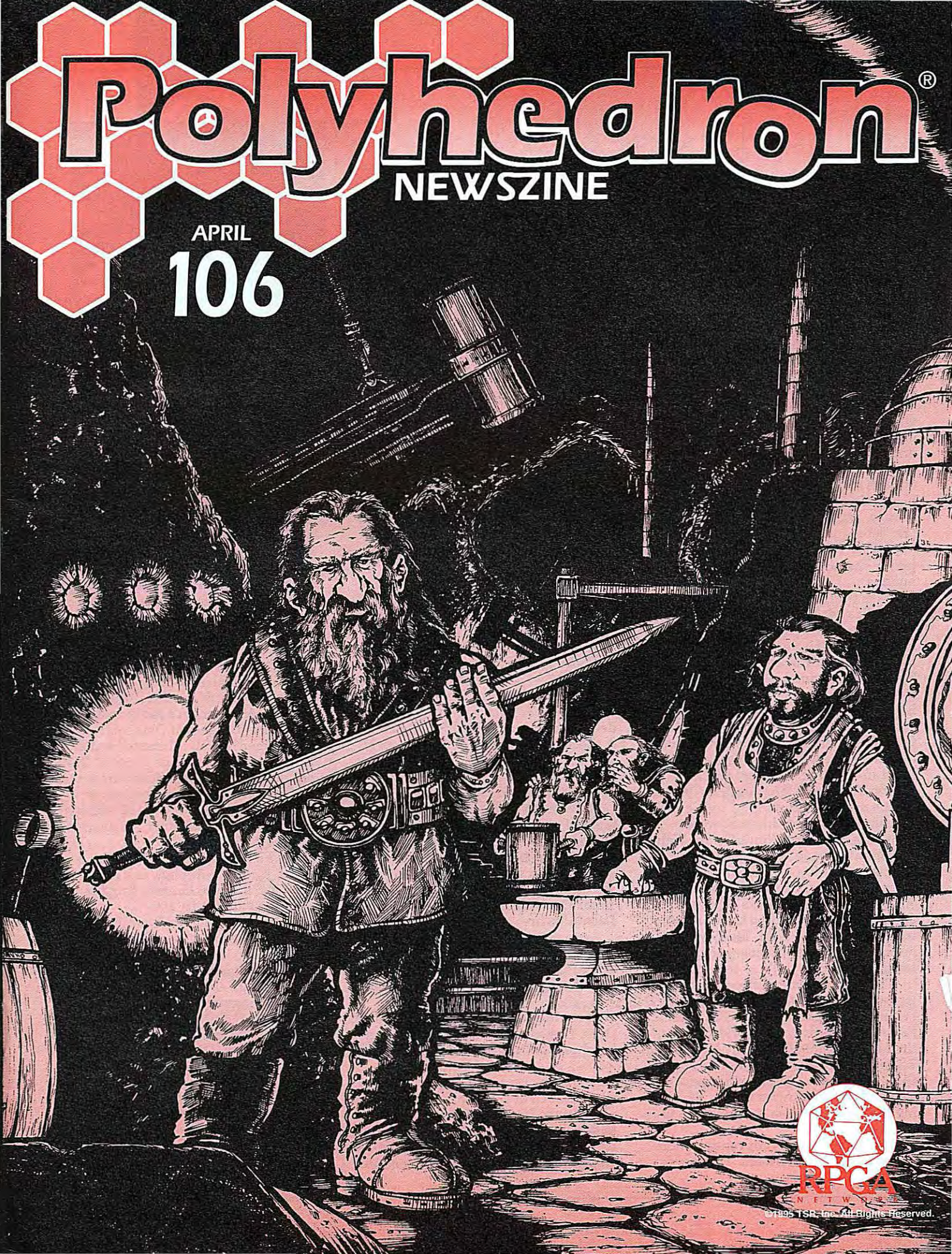

RPGA NETWORK

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Notes from HQ

Another Winter Fantasy

This was the first WINTER FANTASY™ Convention in four years without a snow storm, and the attendance of this year's show was a record 625 people—the largest one yet. Members from as far away as California, Florida, Connecticut, Texas, and Australia attended this year's show.

The premiere of the Living Jungle was a staggering success. My hat goes off to the many enthusiastic role-players who continued to grunt like saru for the duration of the show (while drawing curious stares from other guests at the hotel). The Living City events were, as always, extremely well attended, as was the Debutante Ball Interactive Thursday night. Look for marriages of key LC player characters during the next few months.

As is tradition at the convention, the Network's benefit event and charity auction proceeds go to the Milwaukee County Zoo. This year we raised more than $3,700 for the Zoological Society's Sponsor-An-Animal program to adopt the polar bear Zero and several rockhopper penguins for the next three years. Robin Higgins of the Milwaukee County Zoo was on hand to tell us how this money benefits the animals. Take heart in knowing that Zero will have plenty of food and lard popsicles (yuck!) for the next few years.

Guests of Honor this year were Wolfgang Baur and Chuck Crain. Wolf's informative seminars and DUNGEON® Magazine preview adventure were well attended, giving many gamers insight on upcoming TSR projects. Chuck Crain's details regarding the miniature industry were also a hit. Many young miniature painters are more than likely testing newfound skills at this moment.

This year's Dealers' Room was the largest and busiest in the convention's history. A special thanks to Ral Partha, FASA Corporation, Off World Designs, the Light Trading Company, MagForce 7, Mayfair Games, Castle Perilous, Quantum Games, Infinite Images, Pariah Press, and Atlas Games for making the Dealers' Room a great place to visit between slots.

The success of any convention is due in large part to volunteers. This year's group was top-of-the-line: Willi Burger, Wayne Straiton, David Baker, Carl Buehler, Wes Nicholson, Steve Melka, Dave Samuels, Bill Corey Sr., Ed & Nancy Besowshek, Jeff Cisneros, Craig Petillo, George Henion, Dave Conant, Tom Wham, and the Parkside Area Wargamers.

Jeff Hammerlund and Harold Johnson ran an exciting Historical Miniature's Gaming Society area, maiming and killing potential cowboys in the *Desperado* Wild West Shoot-Out. Field Marshal Rick Brown was also there for our traditional *Axis & Allies* event, and the annual *Dawn Patrol* tournament drew many WWI fliers. These events were a great success, providing hours of enjoyment and a change of pace for many attendees.

This year's show was not without its share of card games. The SPELLFIRE™ Game tournament run by TSR's own Tim Beach and Jim Butler was very well attended, and everyone who played walked away with cards for their collections. There was also the premiere of TSR's new card game BLOOD WARS™, demonstrated by creator Steve Schend. A special thanks goes out to James M. Ward for providing cards for WINTER FANTASY attendees before the rest of the world was able to see them.

The WINTER FANTASY Convention is a place of great rewards both for those in attendance and for Network club members who participate in the Games Decathlon. A special thanks to all who participated, and we hope to see more in 1995. The winners of the 1994 Decathlon are:

1st: Knights of the Empire
2nd: Players' Guild of Central Oklahoma
3rd: Brisbane League of Adventurers

Honorable Mentions: Death Warmed Over, Legion of Silversheen, ARC Fellowship, Fellowship of Steel

There were also awards given to those who excelled at this year's event. First place in the Network Team event went to the Far Flung Gamers for their victory in *Tensions,* followed by the Fellowship of the Dark Spot and Damage Inc. in second and third. A plaque went to Kris Marino for the most first-place victories in Network sanctioned events, edging out competitors by a single point. Jeff Cisneros won the award for being the highest-scoring judge at the convention.

Two special awards were given at the Network Breakfast on Sunday morning, honoring members who support and promote the organization online. Tom Hammerschmidt of America Online and Jay Fisher of GEnie received plaques for their hard work on these two popular services.

Lastly I would like to thank members of the WINTER FANTASY Convention staff for their time and effort in making the show a towering success: Judy Mueller, Dave Gross, Ken Whitman, Shirley Surek, and Scott Douglas. Dates for next year's show are forthcoming, so stay tuned.

New Blood

It is my pleasure to officially announce the RPGA® Network's new coordinator—Scott Douglas of Oklahoma. Scott is a former Regional Director and a founding member of the Players' Guild of Central Oklahoma. Scott comes to the Network from a teaching career in Earth Science, and he has 13 years of gaming under his belt. In his spare time he enjoys all the AD&D® Game worlds, *Toon, Fire & Fury* Civil War Miniatures, juggling, origami, and storytelling. Scott also has two daughters, Marie, 13 and Judy, 10.

Scott has come to Network HQ with fire and determination. He believes youth is the future of the Network and that the organization should reach out to more high school and college students who are unaware of what the Network can do for them. Scott would love to hear from all members who have ideas on the future of the Network. Please take the time to welcome Scott at conventions this summer.

Until next time,

Kevin

About the Cover

Phillip Robb provides this month's look at the "Dwarven Foundry."

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If your mailing label reads

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Polyhedron® NEWSZINE

Volume 15, Number 4
Issue #106

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Forgotten Deities

Ibrandul, The Skulking God

by Eric Boyd

Power: Lesser
Plane: Pandemonium
AoC: Caverns, Dungeons, Underdark
Align: CN
WAL: C
Symbol: Four interlocking silver circles on a dark purple background
Sex: Male

Ibrandul is the god of caverns, dungeons, and the Underdark. Worshippers in Calimshan and other areas of the Shining South claim that Ibrandul watches over humans who must venture into hostile underground areas, aiding and guiding those who serve him when they are in need. Ibrandul is usually depicted as a monstrous ibrandlin, a type of modified fire lizard that roams the endless caverns of the outer plane of Pandemonium. During the Time of Troubles, Ibrandul was spotted wandering the Underdark beneath Waterdeep and Undermountain.

Unbeknownst to his worshippers, Ibrandul was killed by the hand of Shar. (Ibrandul's dead avatar is believed to lie in a lost level of the dungeon located beneath the city of Waterdeep known as Undermountain.) Shar has always jealously guarded her portfolio of darkness and her worshippers, and when Ibrandul was tremendously weakened during the Time of Troubles, Shar killed him for daring to subvert her rightful followers. After the gods ascended to the heavens, Shar acquired the power and portfolio of Ibrandul. Shar's guise as Ibrandul is quite useful to her, allowing her to subvert the worship of her hated enemy Selûne without drawing attention to her most faithful worshippers, the nightbringers. Shar/Ibrandul enjoys the delicious irony of secretly eroding the power of the Lady of Silver, particularly in the city of Waterdeep, one of the seat's of Selune's power.

Ibrandul's Priests

Priests of Ibrandul are expected to proselytize among adventurers and the poor folk of cities. They are expected to build temple fortresses deep in the Underdark to serve as sanctuaries for those who venture in the depths. Shar now keeps watch over the sect of Ibrandul and grants his priests their spells. Shar is pleased with her new agents and has made them all specialty priests.

Before Ibrandul was slain, he provided his priests with spells to modify fire lizards into ibrandlin, the "lurkers in the darkness," which priests could train to guard Ibrandul's temples. (These monstrous fire lizards are detailed in the *Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set.) With Shar's favor, the ibrandlin are now beginning to breed true. Ibrandul tended to ignore his followers before the Time of Troubles, not providing enough power to turn the ibrandlin into a self-propagating species. It was this inattention that probably led to his defeat by Shar.

At 5th level, specialty priests of Ibrandul must undergo a secret ritual involving an ingestion of ibrandlin blood. As a result of the ceremony, large areas of the wrists, forearms, chest, back, and legs of the priest are covered with patches of overlapping scales. These scales give the priest a base Armor Class of 5, but results in a loss of 1d3 points of Charisma.

AB Con 11*, AL CN; WP any; AR as bard; RA dark purple robe covered with a pattern of large, overlapping silver rings, belted with a black sash; SP All, Creation*, Divination*, Elemental, Guardian, Healing*, Protection, Sun, Travelers*, SPL *create ibrandlin* (P6—see page 19 for a description of this new spell); PW 1) bonus NWPs underground navigation and direction sense (+2 below ground, –2 above ground), recommended NWPs include mining, animal training, and local history, 1) allowed to take dwarven detection proficiencies or the NWPs dwarf runes, fungi recognition, sound analysis, and underground survival without penalty (PHBR6), 5) initiation ceremony results in base AC of 5 and loss of 1d3 Charisma; TU nil; QS *highway*

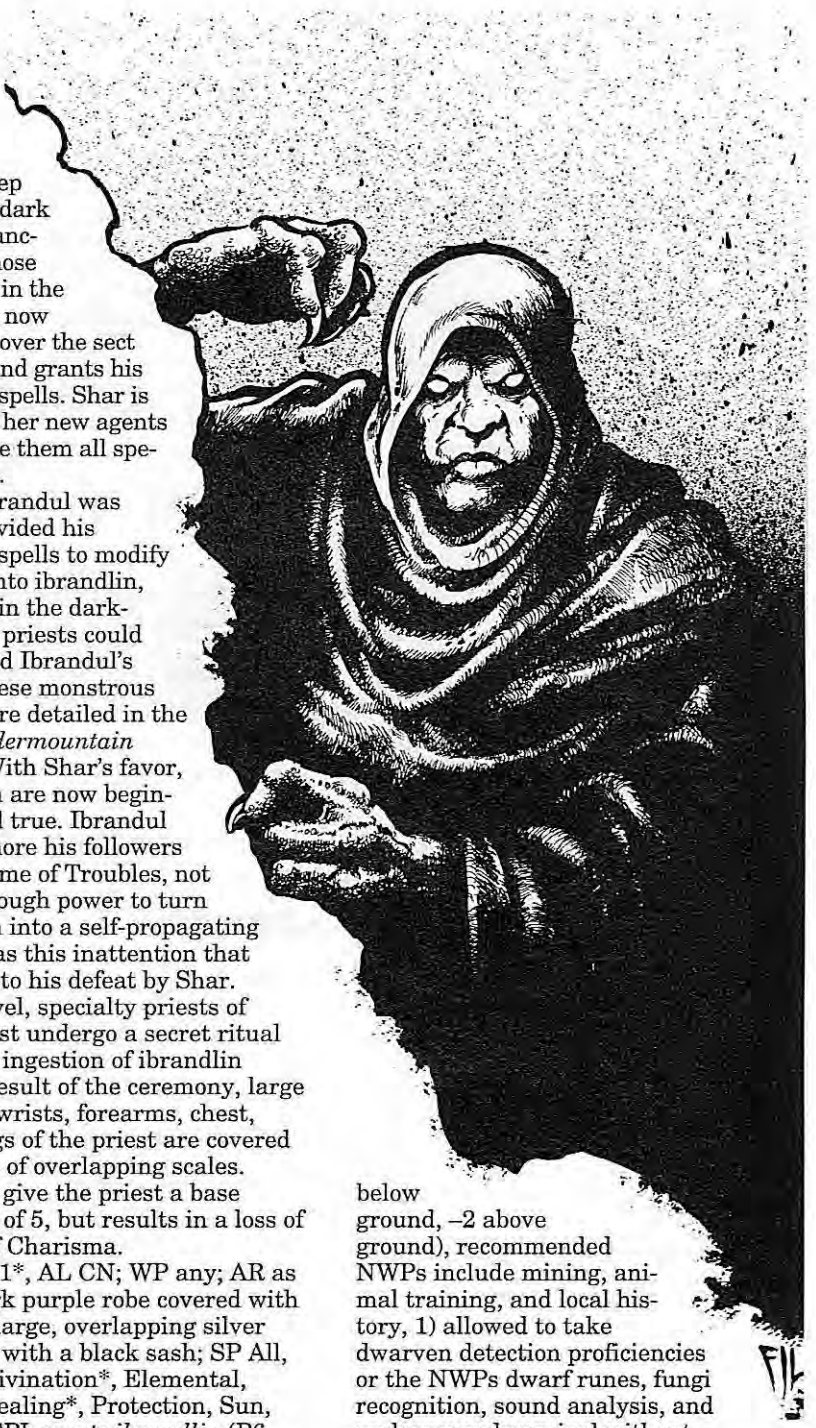

illustration by Phillip Robb

Letters

Real Heroes

Dear Network Members,

On behalf of the 1,700 children and adults with developmental disabilities served by the Chicago Association for Retarded Citizens, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your generous donation. CARC is very grateful to be the recipient of the proceeds raised at your November Rock Con convention.

Your donation has been earmarked for CARC's Respite Care Program. This program provides short term in-home intervention services to families who care for children with severe and profound disabilities. The Respite Program enables parents to be away from home for short periods with the comfort of knowing their child with special needs is being well-cared for by a trained professional.

Since your donation arrived in the midst of a special campaign, it will be matched dollar for dollar by a private foundation.

Thank you again for your support.

Tera McAndrews
Director of Media & Public Relations, CARC

One of the most gratifying parts of being a member of the Network is reading letters like this one. Michael Schneider organized the Network role-playing Benefit events which contributed to CARC and the Don Snow memorial fund. Raising money for causes ranging from literacy to AIDS research, from sponsoring a polar bear at the Milwaukee Zoo to making sizable contributions to the Children's Hospital, Network members always find ways to be real heroes even as they have fun playing them. Next time you go to a convention, be sure to set aside a few dollars to play in the Benefit event.

How do I enroll a character into the Living City? I have photocopied the character sheet from the May 1994 issue of POLYHEDRON® Newszine and have created my character. Do I just bring my character to a tournament and begin using it?

I also wondered why psionicists were not allowed into the gates of Ravens Bluff. Are these characters sold in special auctions or the like?

How would I go about acquiring a map of the Living City? In many of the Newszines there are descriptions of many places, but never an overall map of the area. Is this so you can expand the city without limits?

Mike Damewood
Cuba, MO

Yes, to play in a Living City event, just show up with that character sheet. Once you've played, you may fill out a Who's Who Form. These forms are compiled by Network member Don Weatherbee, who has spent countless hours maintaining the Living City database. Not all Living City characters have been put into the database yet, but eventually we hope all will be recorded there.

Psionic player characters in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting aren't actually arrested at the gates to Ravens Bluff. It's just that the optional rules for psionics are not used in the Living City campaign (to help keep things from becoming very confusing for DMs and players alike). There are no current plans for auctioning off psionic characters for the Living City.

A beautiful portrait map of Ravens Bluff (drawn by Valerie Valusek) appeared in the out-of-print and hard-to-find LC1 Gateway to Ravens Bluff. *A limited number of those maps remain here at HQ, and you may see them for sale or as prizes at the* GEN CON® *Game Fair and the* WINTER FANTASY™ *Convention. You're right, though—the city map has remained purposefully vague in order to allow plenty of contributions without running out of space.*

So it's with both trepidation and hope that we are producing a huge street map of the Living City even now. Dave O'Brien, who created the much-praised map for the Living Jungle (in issue #102) is working on not one, but eight double-page maps which, once connected, detail the entire city. We'll start printing those maps as the center spread of the Newszine early this summer (as soon as some great fans of the Living City have helped us place some street and building names).

If you have any friends who like the Living City but haven't yet joined the Network, tell them they won't want to miss the Newszine this year!

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Elminster's Everwinking Eye

Endless Treasures in Turmish

by Ed Greenwood

Turmish still seems to have a large heap of treasure awaiting discovery, so our tour of possible sites where it may be found continues. We dealt with lost Lanthalal last time, so now it's time to move on to the little-known location of ...

Merrydell

This forest-girt valley is home to a few humans, a few more elves, and a lot of gnomes and halflings. They make toys and small, useful items (snag-free fishing hooks or carry-boxes with spring-loaded, slide-shut-by-themselves wooden lids, for storing spices, tea and the like, for instance), crafting in wood, blown glass (notably bottles and globe-lamps), and fibers (notably fine waxed cord and thread of various hues). This hive of industry is protected from thieves and brigands by a local band of elven adventurers, who spend their idle time practicing music or composing new ballads.

Visitors will find the place crammed with whimsically-balconied cottages, some connected by decorative arches, ornate waterspouts, or flying bridges adorned with intricate wood carvings. Somewhere amid all this bright chaos is hidden a tiny box that teleports from one spot to another (all of them in the valley, but scattered widely—one is known to be on a roof-walk, another high up in the fork of a tree, still another somewhere in the cellars of a private home, and so on) in rotation. The box holds a key.

The large, simply-worked brass key opens a lock hidden somewhere else in Merrydell—probably in a roof, ceiling, post, or somewhere else one won't expect to see a keyhole. Behind the door the key unlocks is a box containing three spellbooks: the legacy of the long-vanished (onto other planes, it is said) sorcerer Meldarth the Mighty.

Meldarth was a mage of Chessenta who began life as a warrior-adventurer. When all his companions perished in a battle from which he barely escaped alive, he put the adventuring life—and his first spellbook, said to be full of explorative and battle-spells—behind him, and turned to a life of research, devising many new spells of all kinds (recorded in the second book; DMs can fill its pages from various articles in DRAGON® Magazine, or use any of the "nameless" [i.e. lacking a wizard's name] spells in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Adventures sourcebook or *FR4 The Magister*). Late in life, Meldarth had a brush with wild magic, and it so entranced him that he plunged into mastery of it forthwith, setting down his researches (and new spells) in the third tome (DMs can glean its contents from the *Tome of Magic* sourcebook).

One day Meldarth decided he was powerful enough to explore other worlds, and he constructed a portal. He stepped through it and has not been seen since, though his portal (its location now forgotten) is still said to flicker silently and endlessly, awaiting his return or the passage of others, somewhere in a cellar in Merrydell. Just where it leads, only Meldarth knows.

Merrydell is a community of much wealth, but most of it is invested—in Alaghôn and the coastal cities of the Vilhon Reach—and travelers will find few coins to spare in the place. There are few tales of hidden treasure, but many residents hide spending money (50 gp at most) in hollow bedposts, behind false walls, partway down privy chutes, under swing-up mantelpieces, and in similar clever hiding-places.

Moonhunt Down

This name applies to both a trail-town and the mile-long hill that shelters it, forming the northern boundary of the busy community of horse-breeders and artisans.

The steep-sloped, grassy hill is usually cloaked in golden wildflowers, and has a barrow-tomb at its heart—a complex of rooms reached from some secret way not (according to both legend and fruitless investigations) in or on the hill at all. The tomb is said to be the resting-place of a rich dwarven lord.

This dwarf styled himself The Lord of Rubies when he ruled a small realm (roughly equivalent to present-day Turmish in extent, though continually beset in the mountains by orc tribes too powerful to drive out or eradicate) from the Down over a thousand years ago. Both his true name and that of his land are now lost and forgotten, but local lore is clear on one point: he lies in his tomb in armor inlaid with a thousand thumb-sized rubies—a suit that (if legend describes it truly) is worth more than many small kingdoms in Faerûn.

The hill's name comes from an even older tale—of the destruction of an elven "flying hunt" on this spot over five thousand years ago, under the spells and blades of a warband of elven foes. On this hill the smoking corpses and ashes of the Moonhunt crashed down, casualties in a war whose sides and outcome have been forgotten; all that survives is the expression, current in the later days of Myth Drannor and preserved in old ballads and writings, that refers to a hard-fought battle or sorcerous spell-duel as "a proper Moonhunt Down."

Nonthal

This busy, rather drab place is a market town for farmers more known for the stink of its slaughterhouses and tanneries (and the ever-present smell of manure) than for prosaic tales of long-ago splendor or buried treasure—but treasure there is ... or may be. Local legend insists that the mage for whom the town is named maintained both a cottage home (ransacked after his death, it vanished long

ago as its stones were carted away for use elsewhere) and a magical stronghold somewhere else.

The entrance to "Nonthal's Hold" is well known: a sunken lane or path behind the Three Trees Inn near the center of town. The lane only leads down to a disused dung-pit—but the pit is disused for a good reason: Nonthal guarded every third step or so along the path with a teleport trap. Those who traverse the lane without continually uttering secret passwords (at the correct spots and in the right sequence) are whisked away by a series of invisible gates to various remote and perilous destinations across Faerûn.

The last gate presumably delivers visitors into Nonthal's lair (said to be a treasure store of spellbooks, collected statuary from all over the Realms, and powerful magic items), but there are at least 11 (possibly more) gates to get past before one reaches it.

Leaping into the lane from one side, partway down, in an effort to evade some or all of the gates, always seems to instantly entrap one in the very first gate—which leads to Yliyl, a small, remote oasis in the heart of Anauroch.

Yliyl is far indeed from the edge of the desert, and is a harsh place where jackals and vultures lair—and the ghosts of a tribe buried there with all their treasure long, long ago wander by night.

The Yliyarr tribe were buried with all their belongings because of what killed them, a pestilence other Bedine nomads of Anauroch feared would spread, or—tales differ as to the fate of the Yliyarr tribe—because of a curse laid by the most powerful "witches" of the Bedine because the Yliyarr "went down" to "a world below" to serve horrible creatures there; most sages believe the fragmentary descriptions of the legends refer to the fell and mighty elder subterranean race of the Phaerimm). (DMs who'd like details of desert conditions are directed to *FR13 Anauroch* and the AL-QADIM® sourcebooks; details of the Phaerimm are given in FR 13 and in *The Ruins of Myth Drannor* boxed set.)

The second of Nonthal's gates takes those encountering it to a cold and windswept mountain peak west of Whitehorn, in flind and ogre-infested lands north of Thar in the Moonsea North. Few who unwittingly stumble through it escape the fierce ogre foraging bands, flind patrols, or packs of hungry wolves to reach Glister, Whitehorn, or Ilinvur. (The Moonsea North was covered in earlier Everwinking Eye columns in these pages; the closest country to it described in Realms sourcebooks is in *FR9 The Bloodstone Lands.*)

The third gate deposits those who traverse it on Dlathilvaer, also known as The Prow In The Sunset, an isolated, high-peaked forest island near Evermeet, roamed by Kholiathra, moonhorses, and the few embittered outcasts from elven society—those of power too crazed, violent, or evil to dwell among their kin. Dlathilvaer lies within the defenses of the realm of Evermeet ... and there are persistent rumors of gates appearing periodically at various spots on it—gates that were old before the elves ever came to its shores, open only briefly, and lead to unknown destinations; some tomes at Candlekeep hint that they open into other worlds. (Details of the inhabitants of Dlathilvaer and the defenses of Evermeet appear in the sourcebook *Elves of Evermeet*).

The worst thing that can befall an adventurer is to find too much treasure too early. What d'ye do with the rest of your life?

—Mirt the Moneylender of Waterdeep
Said to a gathering of warriors
at the Inn of the Dripping Dagger
The Year of the Harp

The fourth gate guarding Nonthal's lair opens into a snake-infested clearing (actually a place of rocks, where trees are few and stunted) deep in the jungles of Chult, somewhere near (and west of) the headwaters of the River Tiryki. There are reports of crumbling, overgrown ruins of unknown origin (and extensive subterranean areas beneath them) in the jungles near the place of rocks, but no adventurers have explored these lost cities and lived to tell of what they found; the only survivors have passed them by to devote themselves to the grim task of fighting their way down the river and out of the jungle. (Details of life and conditions in Chult appear in *FRM1 The Jungles of Chult*).

The fifth of Nonthal's gates leads to a little-known mountain valley in the heart of the Lhairghal peaks or West Wall of the Sorcerers' realm of Halruaa, near Zoundar.

The Fallingstar valley is named for the spectacular waterfall that plunges down from it to join larger streams far below, and is home to a small school of willful students of the aged master necromancer Yosper—an evil man who built a vast slave-trading empire and exchanged its wealth for a mysterious artifact that has granted him the ability to travel the planes at will. He's seldom seen on Toril these days, and his abandoned pupils spend their days studying, playing pranks on each other, and committing mayhem on the local mountain sheep and any intruders unwise enough to enter the valley (they are NE or CE male human wizards of levels 6–10, and they like to fly around magically, blasting things). The sourcebook *FR16 The Shining South* gives details of the realm and spells of Halruaa.

The sixth gate on the way into Nonthal's lair leads to the Underdark of southern Faerûn—specifically, to a webwork of caverns near Velm's Brace.

The Brace is a monster-haunted, ruined stronghold in a vast cavern well east of The Deep Realm, the largest surviving kingdom of the dwarves in Faerûn. Velm Dragonslayer was a dwarven hero of long ago; his tomb is said to contain mighty magic, and such claims draw dwarven adventuring bands hence, often, to search—and they in turn attract many monsters of the dark realms, seeking food. *FR11 Dwarves Deep* gives some indication of the local geography, and DMs are directed to the sourcebook *FOR2 Drow of the Underdark* and the *Menzoberranzan* boxed set for Underdark details.

Where the later gates of Nonthal's defenses lead is not know, although the term "teleport trap" is thought to be based on the fact that some of them lead to dangerous subterranean chambers (perhaps in Undermountain, the vast dungeon complex beneath the city of Waterdeep; it is partially detailed in two *Ruins of UnderMountain* boxed sets).

Exactly what riches lie in Nonthal's well-guarded sanctum (if any) are also a mystery—all that legend says about the matter is that intruders must beware a pair of flying, spell-hurling "battle horrors" (augmented variants of the guardian monster known as a helmed horror, detailed in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting boxed set).

Obelner's Well

This quiet, beautiful town was once a roaring, lawless smugglers' haven where crooked outfitters and lithe trollops vied with each other in ever-more-daring ways of relieving visiting pirates and contraband runners of their coins.

Some such activities still go on today, but bodies in the streets and open sales of poisons are things of the past. The town retains a rich store of tales of the wild days, however—and so many smugglers died or fled in haste from "the Well" that much loot must have been left behind for others to seize.

Some of it may have been hidden well enough to survive to this day—notably the riches said to lie in a complex of subterranean rooms reached by climbing partway down the deep well that gives the town its name.

The way into the "rooms beside the well" are hidden by a permanent illusion of solid stone somewhere in the curving shaft wall, and is said to be guarded by some sort of magic-using monster that can become invisible. Local tales say the rooms contain "chests full of gold" and other riches.

We'll learn more of the treasures of Turmish next time—so, fair fortune until then. ❑

illustration by Michael Hearrold

In a Strange Land

Following in the Footsteps of Gulliver

by James P. Buchanan

Jonathan Swift has been described as "the greatest satirist in history." He wrote many politically oriented pamphlets, articles, poems, and books, including *Tale of a Tub, Battle of the Books,* and *Gulliver's Travels.*

How Swift got the idea to write Gulliver's Travels is one of the most fortunate accidents in literary history. Swift was a member of an informal writer's group which called themselves the Martinus Scriblerus Club. Each club member was given a topic to write a story about. Swift's topic was to satirize dramatic travel literature, which was very popular during that age of European exploration.

Readers should notice that Swift contrasted different characters, such as the Lilliputians and the Brobdingnagians, or the Houyhnhnms and the Yahoos, to create his self-educating satire. Swift also savagely lampoons individuals—such as George I—and groups—such as lawyers.

Gulliver's Travels is a multidimensional novel that can be read as a fantastic adventure story, as a satire of 18th Century English politics, as the first true science-fiction story, or as a social and moral commentary on human society.

DMs should first read an unabridged copy of *Gulliver's Travels* before using Swift's novel for campaign settings. Being familiar with Gulliver's four extraordinary voyages will help the DM understand the NPCs' point of view and how they will treat or mistreat the player characters. Likewise, it is a good idea to disguise this source material by changing names, locations, and creature abilities to fit your specific campaigns.

Our Hero

Lemuel Gulliver, human male, F6: AC 10; MV 12; hp 56; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M (6'0"); AL LG. S 15, D 14, C 17, I 18, W 3, Ch 17.

Weapon Proficiencies: Pike, pocket pistol, scimitar (specialized), short sword (specialized)

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Carpentry (15), create gunpowder (15), English (native tongue) etiquette (15), healing (17), swimming (17), linquist (19), navigation (16), reading/writing (17), rope use (15), seamanship (15)

Lemuel Gulliver is a well-proportioned, robust, and very handsome man of 38 years. He stands 6'0" tall and weights 180 lbs. His hair is light brown and his eyes blue. He keeps his face clean-shaven and wears his hair in a ponytail. Gulliver's European costume consists of a broad-brimmed hat, silk shirt, a wool vest, a buff jerkin (a buffalo leather jacket), trousers, a wide leather belt, stockings, and leather shoes. Gulliver normally carries one scimitar or a short sword, two "pocket-pistols," a pouch of powder and bullets, pocket watch, knife, silver snuff box, razor, handkerchief, comb, spectacles, a "pocket perspective" (a collapsible pocket-sized telescope) and a small journal book. Gulliver's purse usually contains 9 gold coins, 15 silver coins, and 20 copper coins. European explorers carried inexpensive gifts to charm the people they encountered. During Gulliver's fourth voyage, he carried two folding knives, three bracelets of false pearl, a small looking glass, and a bead necklace.

Gulliver was born the third of five sons in Nottinghamshire, a county in north central England. At age 14, Gulliver was sent to Emanuel College to study medicine, then apprenticed under the London surgeon James Bates. Gulliver also studied navigation and mathematics, as he planned to travel around the world.

After his apprenticeship, Gulliver soon became ship's surgeon on the *Swallow,* captained by Abraham Pannell. After spending three-and-a-half years on a voyage in the Eastern Mediterranean, he bought a house in London and married Mary Burton. Unfortunately for Gulliver, his London practice failed to bring in enough money to support his family, forcing him to make several voyages around the world. During these voyages, he learned to speak at least some Dutch, Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian and Lingua Franca.

Between 1699 and 1711, a series of misadventures brought Gulliver into extended contact with a number of odd cultures and strange creatures. His ability as a champion linquist allowed Gulliver to quickly learn all the foreign languages he encountered. However, Gulliver's encounters with supernatural nations began to destroy his human identity. (By the end of the novel, Gulliver has become completely mad and desires only to become a rational horse.) The chief causes of Gulliver's insanity were his own pride, his hatred of the Yahoos, and the knowledge that he could never become part of the fantastic cultures he encountered.

Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own.

—Jonathan Swift
Preface to
The Battle of the Books

Gulliver's most famous encounters were with the diminutive Lilliputians and the gigantic Brobdinagians. While most know something of these two races, not everyone is aware of some of the more exotic peoples Gulliver encountered.

City in the Sky

The city of Laputa is a marvel of magical engineering: a flying city. It is populated by a race of humans who value philosophy and technology. The Laputans use their intellectual and technological superiority to control other countries.

Laputans: AC 10; MV 12; HD 1d6 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA dropping stones, gun-powder weapons; SZ M; ML Average (8–10); INT Average–genius; AL LN(G); XP 175.

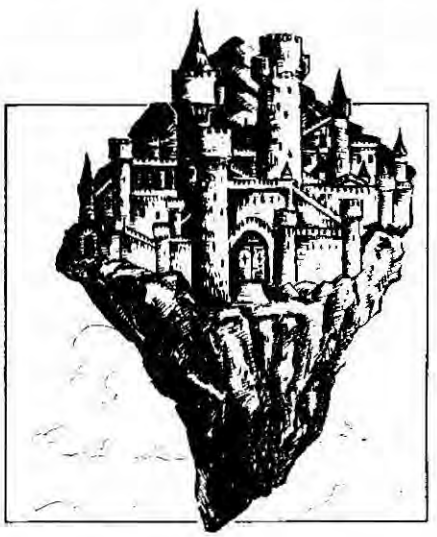
Laputans wear 18th Century European garments adorned with representations of suns, moons, and stars, interwoven with those of fiddles, flutes, harps, trumpets, guitars, harpsichords and many other musical instruments, some found only on their flying island.

Laputan philosophers (all of them happen to be men) surround themselves with globes and spheres, mathematical instruments, pens, bottles of ink, blank paper, telescopes, microscopes, scrolls, and books. PCs will discover that even Laputan food is shaped to resemble musical instruments or abstract geometric forms.

Laputans (satirically representative of the English) use their flying island to keep the inhabitants of Balnibarbi (Ireland) in servitude. When a Balnibarbi city refuses to pay tribute to the philosophers, the Laputan monarchy orders the flying island to hover above the rebels' land to block sunshine, snow, or rain from falling on their farms and gardens. If the revolt continues, the Laputans bombard the city with hundreds of rocks dropped from their aerial vantage point. If the city still refuses to pay tribute, Laputans could use the flying island itself as a colossal hammer to smash the rebel city, but this has never been done for fear of breaking their island home apart.

Laputan military technology equals that of Earth's Renaissance, including the arquebus and cannons. The entire Laputan army is made up of lower-class men and women, as Laputan philosophers never take the time to study mundane concerns such as warfare.

Swift used the airborne Laputan philosophers, as well as Balnibarbi Projectors, to satirize over-valuing reason and abstract studies. Obsessed with abstract reason, these impracticable philosophers do not invent anything practical, but only squander resources that could be used to help the people they rule over. Upper-class Laputan men are extremely obsessed with abstract mathematics, the celestial music of the spheres, as well as astronomical and judicial astrology to the exclusion of everything else. These men spend most of their lives in intellectual stupors, unaware of anyone or anything around them. When lost in thought, these archetypical absent-minded professors tilt their heads to one side, while one eye points inward and the other straight up. These upper class men must be brought back to reality by lower-class pages who use tools called Flappers: inflated bladders, filled with small pebbles, that are fixed to the ends



of staffs. These pages very gently strike their masters on the mouth if they need to speak, on the ear if they need to hear, or in the eyes if they need to see where they are walking.

Laputan philosophers are so entirely devoted to abstract problems that the quality of practical skills, from tailoring garments to constructing homes, is absolutely wretched. According to Gulliver, these people are very clumsy, awkward, and unhandy—unable to do anything with skill except for abstract mathematics and music. They lack imagination, fancy, and invention.

The insanity of Laputan philosophers has spread to the island of Balnibarbi, where common sense has been replaced by a group of commonwealthmen calling themselves the "Academy of Projectors," satirizing the Royal Society of London. These are schools filled with hundreds of madcap crackpots who are obsessed with unproductive experiments designed to reverse natural systems. Projectors attempt to extract sunshine from cucumbers, to reduce human excrement to its original food, turn ice into gunpowder, to construct buildings by starting with the roof and finishing with the foundation, to mix colors by only feeling and smelling the paint, and to make many other strange attempts to "improve the human condition." With the exception of their political scientists, projectors are uniformly insane.

The Laputan flying island is an exactly circular disk, with a diameter of 7,837 yards enclosing 10,000 acres. The island is three hundred yards thick. Rain water is collected in four large basins. The island's motion is controlled from a chasm about 50 yards in diameter. This is where a huge lodestone is suspended inside a hollow cylinder. Manipulating this loadstone can make the flying island travel either horizontally or vertically. However, the island cannot fly above the height of four miles and cannot wander more than 18 miles from the island of Balnibarbi. Human sages think this civilization was more practical in ages past when the flying island was originally cut out of the bedrock. This must have been true, as the island is far too practical to have been built by the modern inhabitants. Player characters might find much useful information while exploring long forgotten libraries.

Laputans have a life span of 60–80 years. They consume the same type of foods that were common to 18th Century Europeans. Laputans have few natural enemies. The closest enemies the Laputans might have are flying creatures such as evil dragons who see their island as something interesting to plunder. But the Laputans' use of the arquebus and cannon have kept flying creatures at a safe distance, so far.

Adventure Hooks

◆ Monsters seize Laputa and use the flying city to raid Balnibarbi or ships that come too close to the floating island. Consequently, the Laputan philosophers hire the player characters to dispatch the evil creatures and return control of their island to them.

◆ Equally important, Laputans will be very grateful to any who can find a way for their island to travel over the entire world. The player characters would be rewarded in gold or silver, as the Laputans themselves have little use for it. Furthermore, player characters could earn the right to buy plots of land in Laputa. The flying island is a rela-

tively safe place to build homes, workshops or vaults. A variation on this idea would be for the player characters to trek to Laputa and obtain some obscure information from these philosophers. Because Laputan philosophers are very fond of music. A bard—or anyone skilled in music—could make much money entertaining the flying island's population.

◆ Laputan philosophers are parasites on the societies that support them. The player characters could be hired by the people the philosophers oppress to overthrow the Laputan monarchy and install a new government.

Horse Sense

In the lands of the Houyhnhnms, humans and horses have traded places. The former are no more than wild beasts suitable for little more than physical labor, while the horses, or Houyhnhnms, are creatures of great wisdom and rational thought.

Houyhnhnms (1–100): AC 7; MV 24; HD 2+2; THAC0 20; #AT 2; Dmg 1–2/1–2; SZ L; ML Champion (15–16); Int Highly (13–14); AL LN(G); XP 120.

Even under a close physical examination, Houyhnhnms appear to be domestic breeds of horses. Their coloration is the same as normal horses. Houyhnhnms keep themselves well groomed and wear their manes and tails long. They never put on bridles, saddles or other riding equipment. Some post-Swift illustrations show Houyhnhnms wearing aprons, capes or shawls.

Houyhnhnms possess very dexterous forelegs and can raise their front hooves up to their mouths or above their eye level without bending their backs. They use their pasterns, the area between their fetlock and hoof, to milk cows, construct buildings or even thread a needle. These intelligent quadrupeds have a language that sounds like soft and mild neighing.

The only time Houyhnhnms resorted to brute force to solve a problem was to reduce the population of Yahoos on their island. Thus, Houyhnhnms have never learned any of the combat arts. On the other hand, Houyhnhnms possess natural weapons of hooves, teeth and great natural strength. Furthermore, these equines have prudence, unanimity, are oblivious to fear and maintain a great love for their island nation. These factors make Houyhnhnms a dangerous military force. In addition, Houyhnhnms can learn to use most of the weapons, and wear all types of horse barding, listed in the *Player's Handbook*. However, outsiders, like the player characters, would have to give or sell the Houyhnhnms crafted weapons and armor, as well as teach proficiencies in these weapons.

Houyhnhnms think of themselves as the perfection of nature. Using their own bodies as a guide to judge others. Houyhnhnms will consider only other intelligent quadrupeds, such as pegasi and unicorns to be their equal. Houyhnhnms will be thunderstuck by bipedal characters who can shape change into equine like creatures. Centaurs will be thought of as Houyhnmnms society.

Houyhnhnms instinctively know the correct way of behaving. Thus, they never argue or quarrel with each other. Ignorant of cruelty, warfare and deception, Houyhnhnms are what Adam and Eve were like before they fell from the state of grace. To Swift, Houyhnhnms are rational beings who lack all of the negative passions that most other sentient beings possess. Despite this ice-cold reason, Houyhnhnms practice the art of universal friendship and benevolence to their entire species, to Gulliver, and to the player characters. These quadrupeds do not know other languages, but they are willing to teach their language and culture to visitors.

This Houyhnmnms utopian commonwealth has no "physicians, lawyers, censurers, back-biters, pickpockets, highwaymen, housebreakers, bawds, buffoons, gamesters, politicians, wits, tedious talkers, ravishers, murderers, robbers, virtuosos, as well as no dungeons, axes gibbets, whipping posts, or pillories." Visitors, such as Gulliver and the player characters will never suffer from physical illnesses as long as they live on this island. This effect is similar to the third level Priest Spell, Cure Disease. Houyhnhnms don't wear clothing, as they see no need for it. They will not let anyone or anything ride them. The only literature Houyhnhnms create are poems in the praise of virtue or songs of praise.

Their stratified society is ruled by a class of equine philosophers. These philosophers elect a representative council that meets on the vernal equinox of every fourth year. Representatives from every part of their island assemble upon a large plain or grassland to discuss the state of the Houyhnmnms nation. These meetings are also used to regulate the number of children born during the upcoming years.

Unless they die by accident, a Houyhnhnm's average life span is 70–80 years. They eat grass, hay, and a mash made of oats and milk. Typical Houyhnmnms farms have asses, cats, cows, and other domesticated animals.

Houyhnhnms use arranged marriages based upon the strength of one partner and the comeliness of the other. Positive human desires of romantic pleasures, such as courtship, presents, and love, as well as negative emotions such as jealousy, quarreling and discontent are unknown in their thoughts and language. They have a gestation period of ten months and produce one child per birth. Youths of both sexes get the same education in temperance, industry, and

cleanliness. Exercise races are held many times each year to increase agility, endurance, speed and strength in their children. Winners of such races are rewarded with a song of praise.

Houyhnhnms know how to make pottery and stone-age tools. Their buildings are made from wattle and daub construction. The player characters will notice that doorway frames and individual chambers are larger than in human homes. Houyhnhnms need bigger homes to accommodate their large equine bodies. They do not build defensive constructions such as moats or ramparts. Proficiencies available to PC and NPC Houyhnhnms are agriculture, animal handling, animal training, fire-guilding, healing, herbalism, pottery, rope use, swimming, weather sense and weaving.

Adventure Hooks

◆ Any intelligent and lawful party members, including the player characters, can become fascinated by the Houyhnhnms, who have a utopian society based on pure reason. Houyhnhnms do not attempt to control the minds of other creatures. If lawful player characters or non-player characters spend more than 10 days with the Houyhnhnms, they must roll 1d20 vs. their Wisdom score. If one rolls over his or her Wisdom, the character will attempt to imitate the Houyhnhnms, including a desire to take their form. This happened to Gulliver and his insane desire to become a Houyhnhnms lasted for years.

◆ The Houyhnhnms' island may be invaded by outsiders to mine the island's copper, silver and gold deposits. Other motives to invade this island include to enslave all the Houyhnhnms, to collect native roots, to use the island as a prison camp, to colonize the place with settlers, or to use the island as the ultimate health spa. The player characters could help the invaders, help the Houyhnhnms, or supply weapons to both sides.

◆ Houyhnhnms do not wear horseshoes, as they lack the skill to work iron. Player characters could turn a profit by trading horseshoes, glue, and other crafted objects, as well as better types of cereal grass seeds and the knowledge to cast wizard and priest spells, for the right to mine the copper, gold and silver deposits on their lands.

Nasty, Brutish, and Short

While the equine Houyhnhnms exmplify what humans might aspire to be, the Yahoos show the worst that humans can become. These nasty creatures foreshadow what may ultimately become of Gulliver when he loses his mind.

Yahoos (1–10): AC 7; MV 10, 16 in trees; HD 3; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3; SA thrown filth; SZ L; ML Unreliable (2–4); Int Highly (13–14); AL CN (E); EXP 65.

Yahoos are humanoids whose ancestors may once have been human, but became genetically debased through inbreeding. The heads, chests, lower legs, and feet of both sexes are covered with thick hair. This hair is a mixed pattern of brown, red, black, and yellow. The Yahoo's skin is a brown buff, while nails are long, thick, pointed, and always dirty. Males wear short beards and long ridges of hair down the center of their backs. Both sexes can climb trees as nimbly as a squirrel and are competent swimmers. They sleep in caves, trees, or in crude kennels that more intelligent creatures (in this case the Houyhnhnms) construct for them. Most of the time, Houyhnhnms keep their Yahoos tied by the neck by thin, flexible, but very tough braided twigs or branches. These leashes are fastened to a beam to keep the nasty Yahoos from making mischief.

When an unknown creature (such as a player character) enters a Yahoo tribe's home territory, 1–6 Yahoos may approach the invaders out of curiosity or to steal a few shiny objects. They attack only if first attacked. Whenever possible, Yahoos prefer to fight from a distance. For weapons, they throw rocks, branches and even their own filth at opponents. If the invaders possess members of the equine family, are able to shape change into horse-like creatures via magic, or are in the company of one or more Houyhnhnms, the Yahoos do not voluntarily approach the party.

Yahoos are willing slaves, being far too concerned for short-lived pleasures to organize any resistance against their Houyhnhnms masters. The player characters may attempt to lead the Yahoos in a revolt against their masters, but Yahoo tribes lack enough reason to follow any type of plan, even when they attack other tribes of Yahoos. Consequently, Yahoos might attack the player characters or their horses instead of the Houyhnhnms.

To Swift, Yahoos are what humanity could have become if humans had fallen beyond all hope of redemption. These crude and brutish humanoids live in tribes of 20 to 120 (2d6 x 10) members in extended families. One of every four Yahoos are infants or juveniles who pose no threat to the player characters. Adult females give birth to one to four children every two years. The other three-fourths are adult males and females. Yahoos have no written or spoken language (at least none that Gulliver could recognize).

These slow-thinking anthropoids are used by the Houyhnhnms as beasts of burden. Four Yahoos can pull one or two Houyhnhnms on a sledge-like vehicle. Yahoos obey the commands of Houyhnhnms as long as they are under observation by their masters. If they are not tied up or being watched, however, these mischievous creatures steal milk, devour their master's cats and commit many other acts of vandalism.

During daylight hours, these subhuman scavengers eat nuts, fruits, and carrion. They will supplement their diet by catching weasels, rats, and fish. A tribe may roam several miles to find food. The yahoos always return to their sleeping caves, trees or kennels before sunset. These creatures amuse themselves by eating certain types of intoxicating roots that drive them wild. They are very unclean and often wallow or sleep in the mud.

Adventure Hook

◆ Houyhnhnms may ask the player characters to help their nation get all the Yahoos off their island. The Houyhnhnms think highly of the PCs if they come up with a rational plan to remove all the Yahoos. Once all the Yahoo tribes have been exterminated, transported off the island, or transformed by magic into something much more pleasant to Houyhnhnms (such as donkeys, horses, llamas, or zebras), the Houyhnhnms will thank the party, give them whatever payment they agreed to, and then ask the party to leave the island and never return.

❑

Bugging the Hunters

New Creatures for the Bughunters Game

by Gregory W. Detwiler

Angler

This Shaper-created horror is six meters across and looks for all the world like a rock. It will, however, feel soft and plastic if touched. Anglers have a limited form of telepathy which enables them to sense and read minds around them, which is helpful in preparing their snares.

Each shaper has four tentacles, which may be wholly retracted into its body when not in use. Each one ends in a soft fleshy lump about a meter in area. These lumps are covered with a sticky fluid, and the angler can form them into any shape at will, typically choosing forms such as weapons, tools, boxes, or other containers—or even the still form of a baby. Anyone who touches the shape will adhere to the tentacle tip and be dragged into the creature's great mouth, which is large enough to swallow a man whole. The sticky decoy also has the advantage of immobilizing one or both of the victim's hands, making resistance difficult at best.

The tentacles themselves are too soft to do any real damage in combat. Anyone making a Fitness roll may break free without damage. If he fails and is swept into those jaws, however, he immediately suffers 1d10 points of biting damage, taking a further 1d6 damage for each turn after being swallowed (due to digestive juices). Any attack made on an angler that has swallowed someone will cause half damage (round down) to the victim. The Shapers tend to plant these creatures around water holes, forks in a trail, the perimeters of installations, and other places where intelligent prey is likely to show up.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	80
Reflexes:	60
Stamina:	80
Leadership:	NA
Intelligence:	NA
Body:	60
Psyche:	35
Willpower:	80
Charisma:	NA
Position:	NA

Movement: Anglers move at so slow a pace as to be nearly motionless to the human eye, and must be "planted" at attack zones by the Shapers or (more likely) their servants. Assume the angler to be immobile during a battle.

Dangler

Another Shaper creation, this creature is sure to inflict indoor paranoia on any group that encounters it. Three meters across, it is a great, flat, fleshy thing that clings to room or cavern ceilings by means of a large adhesive "foot." From it dangle four slender, yet powerful arms, which end in hands having eight-centimeter-long claws. The dangler curls up tight on the ceiling until something passes under it, at which time one or more arms drop down to the attack.

The claws on each hand cause 1d8 points of damage, and the creature can attack four separate targets simultaneously. One arm is powerful enough to lift an armored man up to its jaws, which inflict 2d6 points of damage per bite. The victim can break free if he makes a Fitness roll, but he still suffers 1d4 points of damage. Attacking the arms does not count toward inflicting Stamina or Body damage on the dangler: if the arms are severed, but the creature itself is left alive, it grows new arms within a month. Stamina damage cannot be inflicted on the arms; they each withstand 12 points of damage before being severed. As with anglers, Shapers plant danglers in ambush points at likely spots, but these are restricted to cavern roofs or inside buildings. As the tentacles are six meters long, a dangler can render even the largest rooms impassable.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	60
Reflexes:	100
Stamina:	40
Leadership:	NA
Intelligence:	NA
Body:	30
Psyche:	NA
Willpower:	40
Charisma:	NA
Position:	NA

Movement: Danglers move at one tenth human speeds.

Gulper

This amphibian predator is a huge salamander ten meters in length, rather similar to the labyrinthodont amphibians of Earth's Permian and Triassic periods. First encountered in the swamps of Acey-Two, it has since been met with on every other planet with a swamp. Fossil remains seem to indicate that it is a native life form of Acey-Two, which the Shapers have "domesticated" rather than created "from scratch".

The gulper will hide either just below the surface of deep water, or else in mud or thick concentrations of water plants. When prey comes by, it lunges forward and snaps at it. Creatures man-sized or smaller are swallowed whole if they fail to make a Fitness roll. Whether a victim succeeds or not, it suffers 2d10 points of damage, but being swallowed means an additional 1d6 points per turn it is inside the creature (being digested). Swallowed victims also suffer one-half the damage (rounded down) that would-be rescuers inflict on the gulper. If cornered on land, the gulper can inflict 1d10 points of damage on its foes with a sweep of its powerful tail.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	100
Reflexes:	70
Stamina:	70
Leadership:	NA
Intelligence:	NA
Body:	50
Psyche:	NA
Willpower:	50
Charisma:	5
Position:	NA

Movement: Gulpers move at half human speeds on land, but double human speeds when swimming.

Hexapod Horror

This Shaper-created monster resembles a cross between a beetle and a praying mantis. Its posture is that of the mantis, walking on four legs and attacking with a pair of razor-edged forearms. However, its jaws are massive, like those of many beetles, and it is also protected by a chitinous shell. The creature is three meters long and two meters in height.

In battle, the "mantis beetle" attacks with both its powerful bite (4d8 points of damage) and its forearms (4d6 points of damage each). It may use all three attacks in the same turn, but they must all be against the same target. The creature's heavy armor blocks up to 12 points of damage per attack, reducing lethality ratings by 3 points.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	90
Reflexes:	50
Stamina:	55
Leadership:	NA
Intelligence:	NA
Body:	30
Psyche:	70
Willpower:	50
Charisma:	5
Position:	NA

Killer Star

This primitive alien race appears to be an advanced form of echinoderm (starfish, sea urchins, etc.). It is five-sided, and two meters in height, with a leg at each lower corner and an arm at each upper. The star's pentagonal, trunk-like torso is covered with short spines that make up a form of horny armor (blocks 10 points of damage per attack and reduces lethality ratings by 2 points). It has no regular head; the top of its body ends in a mouth of the same diameter, full of crushing teeth that do 2d6 points of damage per bite.

The killer star race is still in the Stone Age, and does not even use artificial weapons (as they are servants of the Shapers). They lash out at a foe with their arms, either to strike (1d4 points of damage per arm) or to seize the foe and drag it into the mouth for a bite. A Fitness check will enable the victim to break free if it makes succeeds, but the victim still suffers 1d4 points of damage. Killer stars can breathe both air and water, and like to defend shallow-water areas such as tide pools and swamps by digging holes precisely as deep as they are tall, then hiding in them. Any enemy that comes wading by will thus take at least one free hit before he even knows the enemy is present. They can be found only by using one's Searching skill, with a –20 penalty in all but the clearest water.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	50
Reflexes:	30
Stamina:	30
Leadership:	30
Intelligence:	50
Body:	17
Psyche:	70
Willpower:	60
Charisma:	10
Position:	NA

Movement: Killer stars move at one-third human speeds (rounding down).

Musties

Allies of the Artificers, musties are two-meter-tall, bipedal humanoid weasels ("mustie" is short for "mustelid," the scientific name of the weasel family). Judging by their technology, they are at a point intermediate between Earth and the Artificers, and aside from an occasional energy-draining device or the like to even the odds, they rely on their own weaponry in battle. They are literally blood-thirsty, and if allowed to kill frequently, they make extremely loyal allies. (**Note:** if a mustie fights in melee combat, it will bite the victim, inflicting 1d6 points of damage initially, and then 1d4 per turn in blood-draining. In general, though, they prefer high-tech weapons to such primitive tactics.)

The musties' main infantry weapon is a semiautomatic railgun of carbine size. It takes a five-round clip of 20-centimeter-long, needle-like metal slugs. This "spike gun" is so powerful that it does normal damage against targets protected by any kind of human armor. However, the armor will ensure that the spike round stops after hitting the target. Backed up by tremendous velocity, a spike round will go entirely through an unarmored man to strike one behind him, doing the same amount of damage. It does normal damage to vehicles.

The "spike gun" is totally silent, and is thus invaluable for snipers. One other oddity: the trigger is inside the stock, and can only be pulled if a fingernail of its precise shape interlocks with it (the nails of all mustie trigger fingers are surgically modified for this purpose) making it impossible for humans or other foes to operate captured spike guns. (Hear the players grinding their teeth?) Although they generally operate as conventional infantry or guerrilla fighters on the ground, musties are said to have been employed in at least one boarding action in space, after the terrestrial vessel's weaponry and engine had been immobilized by some strange weapon of Artificer technology.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	70
Reflexes:	90
Stamina:	30
Leadership:	60
Intelligence:	55
Body:	19
Psyche:	90
Willpower:	70
Charisma:	25
Position:	NA

Movement: Musties move at normal human speeds.

Spike Gun

Cost:	Not available
Weight:	2 kg
Mag:	5
ROF:	3
Damage:	3d8(8)
Range:	100/200/300
Recoil:	Light

Nuker

So called because it "nukes" its targets, the nuker is a cybernetic tank of Artificer manufacture. Ten meters in length, it has three revolving turrets on it, one on each end and another in the center (the center portion of the tank is higher than the ends, giving the center turret a complete field of fire). Each turret contains one cannon which fires a blue energy beam of some sort. Most disturbing, however, is the fact that these tanks display intelligent and independent behavior, showing considerable choice-making capability in battle and quickly adopting new tactics. The entire machine is estimated to weigh about thirty tons.

Nukers are deployed singly or in four-vehicle units, often in camouflaged positions until "enemy" forces (including UTRPF troops) enter the area being defended. Their gleaming, crystalline armor blocks up to 20 points of damage per attack, reducing lethality ratings by 8 points. Many UTRPF commanders consider nukers to be among the single

most formidable threat to human colonization efforts, and the single deadliest foe in combat.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	100
Reflexes:	50
Stamina:	100
Leadership:	50
Intelligence:	70
Body:	50
Psyche:	80
Willpower:	100
Charisma:	NA
Position:	NA

Movement: Nukers move at triple human speeds.

Energy Cannon
Cost: Not available
Weight: 1 ton; Mag: 50
ROF: 3
Damage: 5d12
Range: 500/1000/2000
Recoil: Light

Rauisuchid

This massive reptilian monster gets its name because of its resemblance to the rauisuchid thecodonts of Earth's Triassic Period. However, this creature is several times larger, being twenty meters in length with a two-meter skull. Its mouth is full of 10-centimeter fangs, and can inflict 3d10 points of damage in a single bite. A quadrupedal beast, it can rear up on its hind legs and walk or attack upright for short periods (one turn at a time). This, plus its bulky, muscular torso, has caused the troops in the field to nickname it the "dragon bear." Its head is like that of a carnivorous dinosaur. Its body, tail, and limbs are like those of a crocodile—the one difference being that the limbs are tucked neatly under the body, rather than sticking out to the sides in the usual reptilian sprawl.

Aside from the damage its bite can do, the "dragon bear" can swallow whole creatures of up to and including man-sized. Its digestive juices do 1d8 points of damage per turn that the victim remains inside, and the victim also takes half damage (rounding down) from any attacks made on the creature during that time. In addition, the rauisuchid's mighty tail can inflict 2d8 points of damage with a single swipe. Its scaly hide makes excellent armor, blocking 12 points of damage per attack and reducing lethality ratings by 4 points. In sheer physical power, it is one of the deadliest creatures the Shapers have yet unleashed on their real and imagined enemies.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	70
Reflexes:	50
Stamina:	70
Leadership:	NA
Intelligence:	NA
Body:	35
Psyche:	NA
Willpower:	90
Charisma:	10
Position:	NA

Movement: A rauisuchid moves at double human speeds.

Sharkskipper

The sharkskipper is a peculiar fish, 30 centimeters long, which looks like a cross between a small shark and another earthy fish known as a mudskipper. Like that fish, it has the ability to breathe air instead of water for several hours, and to leap up to ten feet at a bound, using its muscular tail. Though its jaws are shark-like, it hunts more like piranhas, traveling in schools of up to several hundred individuals.

Sharkskippers bite their prey, doing 3d8 points of damage each. Whether on land or in the water, up to a dozen can attack a single man-sized target at once, so swarming attacks are a constant possibility when fighting them. Shotguns (preferably automatic) with flechette rounds are the favored weapon for fighting them, and flame throwers may actually drive them off (they fear drying out prematurely). They can leap for only three meters a bound on land, but in the water, they may still leap two meters. Any boat whose sides are lower than that risks being boarded by a hungry school.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	12
Reflexes:	77
Stamina:	10
Leadership:	NA
Intelligence:	NA
Body:	5
Psyche:	20
Willpower:	50
Charisma:	05
Position:	NA

Movement: Sharkskippers move at normal human speeds on land, and double that in the water.

Siren

This insidious Artificer creation is perhaps the deadliest of all obstacles to the human colonization of space. So deadly is it that there is not even a good description of it; the only fragmentary report ever received was one by a witness who had received an impression of "soft plastic tentacles." This witness, Cpl. Alan Dulles of the UTRPF, had just fought off its mental control. He apparently pulled the pin of a grenade and held it next to several magazines of missile launcher ammo immediately afterward, sacrificing himself to destroy the thing before it could control him again or make its escape. Follow-up troops found nothing to recover, either of the siren or of Dulles. Certain traces on the ground, however, suggest that it is roughly human-sized (2-meters tall).

The siren appears to be a device of rather late design, as its effect indicates that the Artificers had to study dozens, if not hundreds, of life forms before they could create a working model. Essentially, the thing draws victims to it by a form of mechanically-generated psychic power. This unknown power, which cannot be detected by any instruments now in use, has a range of several kilometers. The power creates in the target creature's mind (remains indicate that a wide variety of life forms are vulnerable to the siren's call) whatever sound is most irresistibly sweet to it, impelling it to come to the source of the attraction. Once there, the victim sees whatever or whoever he or she most desires, rushes up to it, and is then strangled (to judge by the wounds), no doubt by the "soft plastic tentacles" reported by Dulles. It may have up to four tentacles, each doing 1d6 points of damage per turn.

Both men and women have been affected at the same time by the same call, unless they made a successful Willpower roll (at –2). This mysterious telepathic call sounds directly in the targeted individual's mind (or the minds of many at the same time), and thus cannot be screened out by ear plugs, helmets, or other protective devices. Were it not for a handful of strong-willed individuals, UTRPF would have no idea of the fate of a number of communities and military patrols, and more research is needed before reliable counters can be devised.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	30
Reflexes:	40
Stamina:	25
Leadership:	NA
Intelligence:	NA
Body:	15
Psyche:	100
Willpower:	90
Charisma:	100
Position:	NA

Movement: The siren moves at normal human speeds.

Tardigrade, Giant

In an interesting example of convergent evolution, this creature looks like an enlarged version of some nearly microscopic arthropods on Earth. Ten meters in length, it has six stubby legs, each two meters in diameter and ending in powerful claws. Its compound eyes apparently see in both the infrared and ultraviolet spectrums as well as normal light, making blinding the creature by any means short of blowing away its eyes an impossible task. Its body is a shell of incredible hardness, having the appearance of a rough gemstone; the tardigrade can withdraw its head and limbs into this shell in the manner of a turtle.

The most peculiar thing about the amphibious tardigrade is its ability to hibernate during periods of drought. Once a tardigrade is totally dried, its flesh shrivels up, the head and limbs shrink into the shell, and the whole animal becomes one crystalline mass of dried material. No matter how long it is in this state, it always "comes back to life" within minutes of being immersed in water. A heavy rain will do the trick.

This hibernation ability brought disaster to the first human colonists to discover them: the members of a mining colony of Ross 248. Working in an arid region, the miners uncovered a large number of these massive crystalline forms. Having no means to properly analyze them, the workers assumed they were enormous gemstones, and stashed them in the very center of the community. One night after the job was done, a freak heavy thundershower struck the area. The colony was completely obliterated by the threat in its midst before morning, with only a hastily-scrawled diary telling what had happened. It is impossible at this point to tell whether this lot of tardigrades was planted by the Shapers, or was merely a natural colony in hibernation. It is likewise impossible to tell how long they had been there.

In combat, tardigrades lash out with their heavy clawed forelimbs, doing 4d6 points of damage; only the front pair of their six legs can be used in this manner. If the animal gathers itself together, it can also make a short 10' lunge that ends in 3d10 points of ramming damage. This ramming attack is used mainly against vehicles and buildings. Its jaws only do 1d6 points of biting damage; the creature is an omnivore and scavenger, and fights more in self-defense than to get its dinner.

The biggest headache in fighting tardigrades is their rocklike armor. This armor soaks up to 24 points of damage per attack, reducing lethality ratings by 8 points. It is also totally invulnerable to all small arms ammo of less power than HEJA rounds. The head and limbs may be attacked normally, and are treated as vital targets for purposes of hitting. Heat-producing attacks, such as flame throwers and lasers, do stamina damage only (tracer rounds must hit the head or limbs to have this effect, due to the body's protective shell). In addition, a tardigrade stunned by heat attacks will revive almost immediately if drenched in water; say, if one climbing a coastal cliff is knocked out and falls into the sea. When fighting during a rainstorm, tardigrades knocked out by heat will automatically revive one turn after they are rendered unconscious, and the heat attacks will only inflict one-half the stamina points they normally do. So far, missile launchers, armor-piercing machine gun rounds, and big explosive charges are the only reliable methods of killing these creatures.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	80
Reflexes:	30
Stamina:	80
Leadership:	NA
Intelligence:	15
Body:	60
Psyche:	NA
Willpower:	60
Charisma:	NA
Position:	NA

Movement: Tardigrades move at one-third (rounding down) human speeds.

UFO

The UFO (a two-syllable word; the "u" is long) is a creature that seems to be native to space and the upper reaches of planetary atmospheres. In its natural form, it is a sack-like thing of diaphanous material, rather like a jellyfish without tentacles. Its body is so light and wispy that it changes shape as it moves, its bag-like body becoming spindle-shaped when it travels at high speed.

UFOs live on pure energy, such as sunlight and planetary radiation such as Earth's Van Allen Belt. They are a major nuisance at best in inhabited areas, because they are attracted to electrical generators, sucking up their power as soon as they come in contact with these devices. Any power source a UFO comes in contact with will automatically become inoperative, and each turn of contact drains energy equivalent to an hour's operating time. In addition, laser beams merely nourish the creature, rather than doing damage, making it difficult for ships to fight them off.

Aside from their laser-absorbing ability, UFOs have no special defenses, but their huge size (up to 30 meters in diameter) allows them to soak up a great deal of physical damage in combat. Too fragile for physical combat, they fight by projecting bolts of electrical energy at their foes, each bolt doing 4d10(6) points of damage. Range is that of a repeating laser (200/500/1000), though rate of fire is only four shots per turn.

UFOs are a serious threat. On several occasions, the Shapers have used them to immobilize spaceships, allowing various other Shaper-created horrors to board the vessels. Rumor has it that a number of recent blackouts on Earth itself are the work of these creatures, and railgun research has been stepped up to find a reliable means of combatting these formidable animals.

Typical Statistics

Fitness:	80
Reflexes:	100
Stamina:	200
Leadership:	NA
Intelligence:	20
Body:	60
Psyche:	20
Willpower:	60
Charisma:	20
Position:	NA

Movement: When drifting in an atmosphere, UFOs can travel at triple human speeds. When "pouring it on" (i.e., when they assume spindle shape), they have been clocked in excess of 7,500 kph, and playing tag with hoppers and other aerial craft is one of their more annoying habits. ❑

Video Drone

Body Snatchers

by Brian & Donna Thomsen

♂ Welcome to POLYHEDRON® Newszine's new movie review column, Video Drone. It is our intention to review new movies of interest for the Newszine's readership to roughly coincide with their release on video, as well as other films of a related subject matter that can also be picked up at your local video outlet. A lot of the older titles will be classics, but others may be distinguished in another way.

Movies provide a multitude of inspirations for gaming. Whether it is a new creature lurking around a corner, a new hero for an ally, or just a new take on a trite old scenario, films add a bit of color to any campaign. If a picture is worth a thousand words, a movie is worth a million. Sometimes you just want to set the mood, just a bit of background creepiness or derring-do.

Whether for research or relaxation, movies are a must for gaming.

I fall into the category of movie-goer who has no right to the adjective "discriminating." In the past ten years, I've walked out on only one film (*Columbus: The Discovery),* and then only after I was sure that Marlon Brando's part was over) and can boast the possession of such really bad movies in my video collection as *The Hollywood Strangler Meets the Skid Row Slasher, Rocktober Blood,* and *Rollerblade.* In my modest opinion, I can give both Joe Bob's Drive In and USA's "Up All Night" a fair run for their money.

However, I am more than willing to admit that my tastes are not necessarily those of your average, normal movie-goer, and as a result must have my view tempered by those of another reviewer to provide the column with an alternative view—not unlike the dynamic that exists between the wonderfully cerebral Gene Siskel and the esteemed screen writer of *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* (a must-see!), Roger Ebert. In this case, the alternative view will be voiced by my wife, Donna.

There is no guarantee that we will argue like cats and dogs, but the potential is there.

♀ Since we've been out here, Brian and I have seen more movies together than we ever did in New York. One of the great things we've discovered in the Midwest is the $3.00 matinee.

We have a simple yet effective system: Brian picks a movie one week, I pick one the next ... and we do try to accommodate each other's tastes. (For example, if there is a new film starring Tommy Lee Jones opening, Brian knows what we'll be seeing.) It all works pretty well, and I don't think either of us has had to sit through two hours of torture (with the possible exception of when my mother was visiting, and she got to pick the movie).

♂ *The Age of Innocence.* Ugh!

♀ As to my own personal tastes, let me say that I like all sorts of films, and not just so-called "chick films." Yes, I liked *The Piano* and *Thelma and Louise,* but I also enjoyed *The Crow* and *Terminator 2: Judgement Day.*

Our basic format will be as follows : one of us will introduce the film, comment on it, and rate it. This will be followed by comments and a rating from the other.

Movies are getting mighty expensive. With so much out there competing for attention, we have to decide where we're willing to invest our time and our money for the greatest entertainment return.

Hence our rating system:

$$$$	Worth full price of opening day or the evening show
$$$	Worth a $3.00 matinee
$$	OK for rental
$	Wait for television
¢	Buy it when it's in the one-dollar bin (and then reuse the tape for recording when you're done)

The Puppetmasters

1994
Starring Donald Sutherland, Julie Warner, Eric Thal
Directed by Stuart Orme

♂ At last a Robert Heinlein classic brought to the screen. You've seen cheap imitations on the screen (*Invaders from Mars* twice), and derivative translations on the tube (the "Operation Annihilate" episode of "Star Trek"), but only now has the SF classic been brought to the screen with integrity and panache.

In a nutshell, aliens land and take control of the individuals of a small town by affixing themselves to the backs of humans. It is then up to a secret government organization to stop the invasion before it spreads. Donald Sutherland plays Andrew Nivens (known in Heinlein's novels as "the Old Man"), the nominal head of this scientific intelligence organization assigned to the problem, Julie Warner is the female expert on aliens, Eric Thal a special agent/hit man who also happens to be Niven's son.

Who is the enemy? how do we fight them? and can we win? These are the questions, and the answers make for a wonderfully fast-moving science fiction thriller that only occasionally skimps on credibility. The script is as faithful to the original novel as possible without coming across as dated or gratuitous (as a result, certain dogmatic diatribes, less-than-credible resolutions, and lewd scenes were neatly ignored by the screenwriters when adapting the novel—with absolutely no detrimental effect on the story).

The special effects are fine, without any unnecessary splashiness to overwhelm the you-are-there-suspense, and the overall feel of the film is more akin to a Tom Clancy "Jack Ryan" film, like *Clear and Present Danger,* than an SF film like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* or *Lifeforce.*

Fast-paced with wonderful performances. I was in heaven.

Rating: **$$$$**

♀ This one was Brian's pick (are you surprised?). I hadn't read the book, and I didn't know much about it. But the commercials piqued my interest, and Brian seemed excited about it, so I agreed to go.

While I couldn't find anything wrong with the movie, it left me lukewarm. The performances were good, the story exciting, and the camerawork well done. It just didn't capture my imagination.

Maybe I was bored by a story I had seen countless times before in countless film variations (to paraphrase Jeff Goldblum in the 1978 remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers,* "Why must they always come in pods?"). Brian correctly pointed out that the novel upon which it is based predates the other incarnations.

Another problem was, unlike some of the other incarnations, the film lets you in on who is and isn't alien-controlled, so there really isn't that much suspense. In fact, in one scene toward the end of the film, the audience can easily see a red flag being waved—of which the folks on screen seem blissfully unaware.

All in all, I didn't consider the *Puppetmasters* to be a disappointment. I just didn't take much of it away with me.

Rating: **$$ 1/2**

Body Snatchers: The Invasion

1994
Starring Gabrielle Anwar, Terry Kinney, Billy Wirth
Directed by Abel Ferrara

♂ Yet another remake of Jack Finney's classic *Invasion of the Bodysnatchers,* but neatly updated for the nineties. Once again, pods from outer space land on Earth and begin to replace people with vegetable-based creatures that resemble them, but that are incapable of emotion. Unlike *The Puppetmasters,* the thrust isn't that war has been declared and our nation fights back. This is more of an every-man-for-himself, trust-no-one war.

The action takes place on an army base, where a civilian ecologist and his family become enmeshed in the alien plot. The performances are uniformly wonderful, with special kudos to Forrest Whitaker, as an officer who would prefer suicide to admitting defeat, and Christine Elise, as a 90210 teen in search of a good time.

Ferrara makes the menace just as real today as it was in the fifties, and the emotionally sterile military environment makes the takeover all the more credible.

Rating: **$$$$**

♀ When this film was released, I thought, "Why do a third version of Body Snatchers?" But since I usually like Abel Ferrara's movies (such as *Bad Lieutenant*), I wanted to see it anyway.

What could this version add to the familiar story? Plenty. This was the perfect synthesis of the two earlier versions, capturing the claustrophobic paranoia of the original, while perfecting the quirky stylishness of the Kaufman remake in the seventies.

This is a fresh retelling, from a totally different point of view. For instance, the use of a military base is a clever conceit, and the classic climax sequence where the "imposter pods" are exposed, triggering the film's final chase sequence, is nicely updated as well.

Ferrara also turns up the suspense a couple of notches. The viewer never knows, right up to the last scene (and beyond) who has or hasn't become a pod-person. You share the characters' quandary on who to trust.

With its interesting casting, moody photography, and ambiguous ending, this film more than proves itself in a crowded field.

Rating: **$$$**

Invasion of the Bodysnatchers

1956
Starring Kevin McCarthy
Directed by Don Siegel

♀ Still one of the scariest films of all time. What could be worse than the sneaking suspicion that everything and everyone around you is changing—and beckoning you to join them? In addition to showing the terrors of blind conformity, Siegel expertly plays on that nagging fear that lurks in the back of everyone's mind: "Maybe their way is better. Wouldn't it be so much easier just to give in?"

Every element of this film serves the story well. Siegel's fast-paced direction, McCarthy's increasingly frantic performance, the eerie background music, and the stark black-and-white photography all combine to make a memorably chilling masterpiece of suspense. After seeing this film, who hasn't begun to have doubts about their neighbors?

The original, and still the best.

Rating: **$$$ 1/2**

♂ I can't argue.

Whether it was meant as a metaphor for McCarthyism, the Red Menace, or just the Dodgers leaving Brooklyn, who cares? I remember having nightmares the first time I saw it on television because I was put to bed before it was over. Naive young fellow that I was, I blamed my parents because I didn't get to see the ending where everything works out fine. The next time I *did* get to stay up until the very end, and—wow!—I still had nightmares.

Looking back, I also have to say that the lack of real special effects, and the black-and-white photography gives the whole film a TV docudrama realism that is scarier than the Amy Fisher story (all three versions) and the Nancy Kerrigan story combined.

Rating **$$$$**

Invasion of the Body Snatchers

1978
Starring Donald Sutherland, Leonard Nimoy, Jeff Goldblum
Directed by Philip Kaufman

♂ For me, the weakest of the three films.

There are good performances (especially Donald Sutherland and Jeff Goldblum), nostalgic cameos (Don Siegel and Kevin McCarthy), and pretty good special effects. But what is the point?

Setting the story in a big city like San Francisco widens the scope, but diminishes the impact. And it takes way too long to cover the same ground that the others managed to do in shorter lengths.

Watching this movie is like looking at that popular version of Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks" diner scene peopled by Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, and Elvis Presley: clever and amusing, but nowhere near as satisfying as the original.

Rating: **$$**

♀ No it's not a classic, but it has virtues.

It restores the unhappy ending, successfully conveys modern urban para-

noia and emotional dissociation, and gives Leonard Nimoy the opportunity to turn in a great performance without a pair of pointy ears. There is also a cameo by Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead that is not to be missed.

Rating: $$

♂ From a gaming standpoint, all four films are valuable for their innovative depiction of an enemy who looks just like you. Whether the creature is an AD&D® Game doppleganger, a *Traveller* alien, or some *Call of Cthulhu* manifestation, its true insidiousness depends on the believability of its most recent appearance. DMs who like to leave clues for their players to figure things out before the creature's unmasking can take a lesson from *The Puppetmasters* or *The Bodysnatchers* in how to do it without spoiling the fun or giving it away. Sporting players might even ally with the DM to further the masquerade by continuing to play their character even after it has been replaced.

One of the greatest virtues for all four films is the you-are-there/this-could-be-going-on-as-we-speak sense that is neatly conveyed by the ordinariness of the setting/time-frame. It plays perfectly on the credibility misnomer that "those type of things just don't happen here-abouts, sonny" (a line usually spoken by a John Carradine or Royal Dano type right before he gets killed).

A similar strategy can be applied to almost any gaming setting or scenario. Imagine that you have just arrived in Lovecraft's Innsmouth, only to find that the pod-people have gotten there first (an eminently appropriate scenario for *Call of Cthulhu*). For the AD&D game, maybe while resting in a village after having slain the dragon and stolen his treasure, you discover the place is in reality the site of the first step in an alien invasion. Or consider a more unusual setting for the body snatchers: Why does Farmer Brown no longer chase you away from his cabbage patch in your *Bunnies and Burrows* campaign? Has he been taken over by some alien force? The possibilities really are endless.

As always, the trick is making the invasion scenario work in a credible way that both players and DM will enjoy. Remember, when your players are getting bored after too many treasure hauls or routine horrors, there's no better time for an alien invasion—just for a little variety, of course.

❑

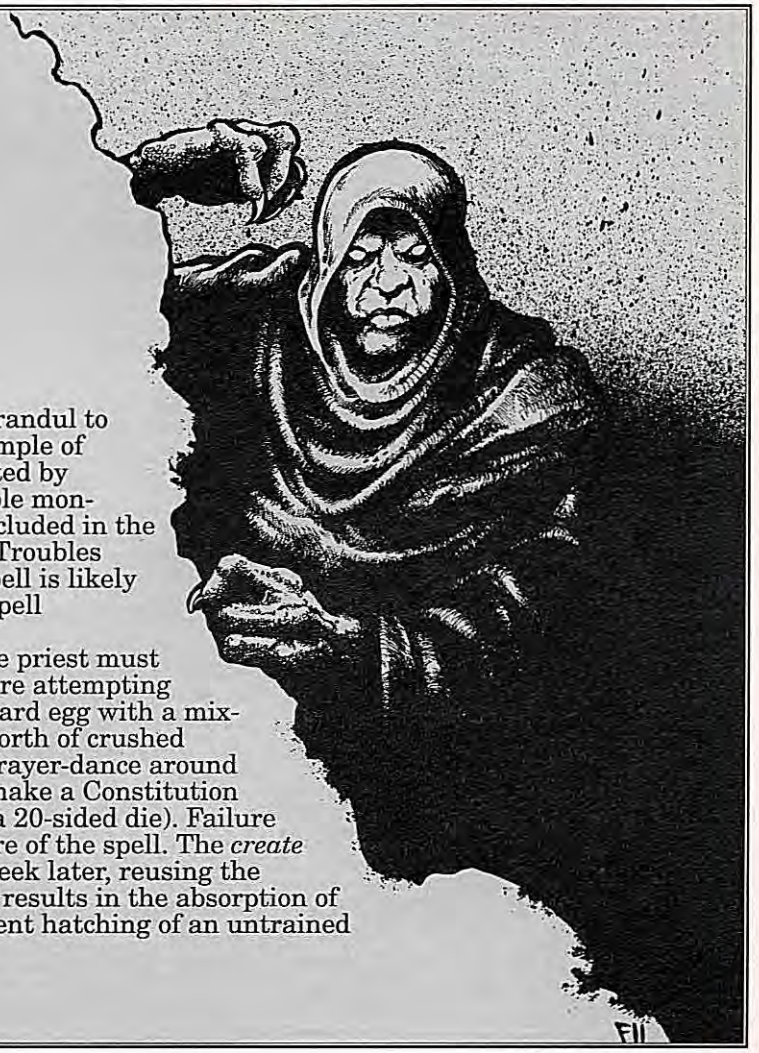
Brian Thomsen is the Director of Books and Periodicals for TSR Inc. Donna Thomsen is a freelance copyeditor/proofreader. Both grew up in New York City, lived there for over thirty years each, and now reside in Wisconsin.

Continued from page 4 ...

Create Ibrandlin

6th Level Priest Spell (Adjuration)

Sphere: Guardian
Range: Special
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 7 hours
Area of Effect: 1 fire lizard egg
Saving Throw: None



This spell was developed centuries ago by priests of Ibrandul to facilitate the creation of fearsome guardians for the temple of Ibrandul located in the Underdark. Ibrandlin are created by magically altering fire lizard eggs to create the trainable monsters described in a MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® sheet included in the *Ruins of Undermountain* boxed set. Since the Time of Troubles ibrandlin have begun to breed true. As a result, this spell is likely to lapse into relative disuse, given the expense of the spell components.

Casting this spell is a long and arduous process. The priest must prepare himself with a week of prayer and fasting before attempting the ritual. The spellcaster must then coat a live fire lizard egg with a mixture of holy oil and diamond dust (at least 10,000 gp worth of crushed diamonds) and then perform a seven-hour ritualistic prayer-dance around the egg. Each hour of the dance, the spellcaster must make a Constitution check (roll equal to or below his Constitution score on a 20-sided die). Failure of any Constitution check results in the complete failure of the spell. The *create ibrandlin* spell can be attempted one more time, one week later, reusing the material components. A successful casting of this spell results in the absorption of the material components into the egg and the subsequent hatching of an untrained hatchling ibrandlin one week later.

Gothic Heroes

A Day at the Fair

by William W. Connors

Welcome to the second installment of Heroes of Gothic Earth, articles designed for use with the Masque of the Red Death *setting for the* RAVENLOFT® *Game rules. This time, we'll take a look at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Commonly known simply as the Worlds Fair, the exposition set standards for entertainment, showmanship, and architecture that remain the standard by which all such shows are judged.*

Next time, we'll take a look at some of the best known sports figures of the 1890s, including Cap Anson and Cy Young, two of the greatest baseball players ever to grace the game.

The World's Fair drew over 21 million people and was spread over 686 acres. The classical architecture and the crisp white paint used throughout the fairgrounds, led the exposition to be known as the White City.

The theme of the exposition was electricity and its unlimited promise for the future. This was obvious right from the opening of the show, when President Cleveland pressed a "magic button" in Washington that turned on the Fair's power a thousand miles away.

Visitors to the White City were amazed to see row upon row of brightly lit buildings, a huge "bridge on an axle" or Ferris Wheel, and countless sideshows and theme parks. These included many European Villages, a moorish Palace, several Oriental Markets, and wildlife from around the world. By any standard, the Columbian Exposition of 1893 was a masterpiece of showmanship.

Of course, modern ethics were not in place at the time. The show featured racist portrayals of blacks, orientals, native Americans, and other non-white groups. Handicapped people were presented as freaks and oddities for the entertainment of fairgoers.

Among the stars of the show were Harry Houdini, Thomas Edison, Nichola Tesla, and Fahreda Mahzar (better known as Little Egypt).

Harry Houdini

Alignment: Neutral Good
Class: Tradesman (Entertainer)
XP Level: 4

Strength: 15
Dexterity: 17
Constitution: 14
Intelligence: 13
Wisdom: 14
Charisma: 14

Armor Class: 7
Hit Points: 15
THAC0: 19
No. of Attacks: 1

Weapon Proficiencies: Derringer, knife, and shotgun

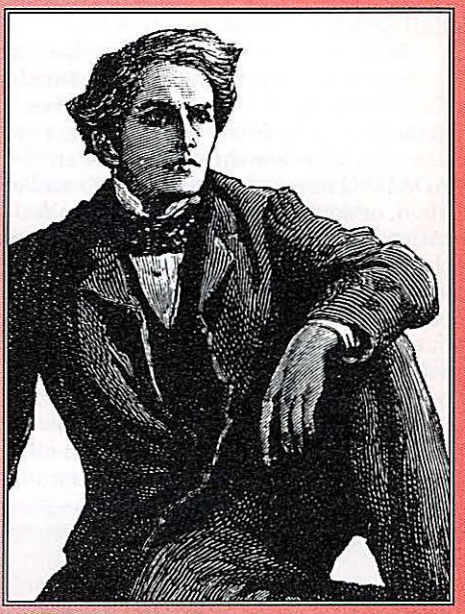
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Acrobatics (17), lang: English (native), endurance (14), pugilism (+1), open locks (15), SI: card tricks (17), and SI: stage magic (17)

Background
Harry Houdini is the stage name of Ehrich Weiss. Although he was born in Budapest in 1874, Weiss's parents migrated to the United States while he was still an infant. He maintains, therefore, that he is a native of his new home, Appleton, Wisconsin.

Ehrich Weiss was raised in a rather strict, highly religious household. His father, a very respected rabbi, instilled in his son a reverence for God and the traditions of Judaism that will almost certainly remain with him forever.

In 1882, Weiss decided to pursue a career as an entertainer. He first found work as a trapeze performer, putting his excellent physical conditioning and natural agility to good use. The young man quickly became fascinated with magic, especially card tricks.

As his interest in magic grew, so did his interest in the magicians of the past. It is this fascination with his predecessors that led Weiss to adopt his now-famous stage name. Weiss had become taken with published accounts of the French magician Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin. At the advice of a friend, Weiss adopted the name Houdini, which he believed was French for "like-Houdin."



At the time of his appearance at the World's Exposition, Houdini is performing with his brother and being billed as "the Master of Cards." He is beginning to see that there is little future in this field, however, and it has recently been suggested that he might do better to pursue a more exotic type of magic. He has taken this advice to heart and has begun to practice escaping from hand cuffs and other restraints. He hopes to make himself a household name by the end of the century as the world's greatest escape artist.

Role-Playing
Houdini possesses a superb mind and natural athletic ability. He is so driven to succeed at all he attempts that the idea of failure never occurs to him. This drive leads him constantly to invent new tricks for his own act and quickly to analyze and master those of his competitors.

Forbidden Lore
Although he is not aware of it, Houdini has latent mystical powers. With proper training, he could easily become one of the world's greatest spiritualists. This natural affinity, however, has made him into a magnet for the supernatural. This might not be especially noteworthy except for the fact that Houdini himself is skeptical of such things and generally attributes them to fraud and trickery.

Thomas Edison

Alignment: Lawful Good
Class: Tradesman (Scientist)
XP Level: 8

Strength: 10
Dexterity: 12
Constitution: 11
Intelligence: 17
Wisdom: 17
Charisma: 12

Armor Class: 10
Hit Points: 25
THAC0: 17
No. of Attacks: 1

Weapon Proficiencies: Derringer, navy pistol, shotgun, and lever-action carbine.

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Academician (17), chemistry (17), electricity (15), engineering (17), journalism (17), lang: English (native), lang: Morse Code (17), photography (14), physics (17), SI: railroads (17)

Background
Although many of Gothic Earth's people think of Thomas Edison as a great scientist, the truth is that he is a great inventor. His keen mind is better suited to finding new applications for existing knowledge rather than the researching and discovery of previously unknown principles. There are exceptions, of course, but for the most part Edison has contributed very little new knowledge to the world. The wealth of applications that he has found for the discoveries of others, however, have already won him numerous honors and earned him a place in history.

Edison was born on February 11, 1847 in Milan, Ohio. As a youth, he received only three months of formal education and, by the age of 12, found himself selling newspapers on the Grand Trunk Railway. During this time, he became fascinated with machinery and began to experiment with various mechanical and technological devices. In 1862 he began to publish his own newspaper, the Grand Trunk Herald.

By 1876, Edison's invention of an automatic telegraph repeating station and other telegraphic devices had earned him some $40,000. He rolled this money into the founding of a private laboratory and continued to research enhancements to the nation's telegraph network. Among his most important contributions were devices that allowed more than one message to be sent over the same line at the same time and the quick, reliable stock market ticker tape. During this time, Edison also turned his attention to the improvement of inventions made by others. The most important of these was his Carbon Telephone Transmitter, which greatly enhanced the operation of Bell's newly invented telephone.

In 1877, Edison announced his discovery of the phonograph system upon which all modern graphaphones are based. This was followed by an electric light bulb and many great improvements to the technology of existing dynamos. In 1882, Edison developed and installed the world's first large central power system in New York City.

Edison has always favored the use of direct current over the alternating current employed by his rivals, George Westinghouse and Nichola Tesla. Shortly after his construction of the New York City plant, however, Edison was forced to concede defeat in this matter when Westinghouse, using a design he purchased from Tesla, built a hydroelectric station at Niagara Falls.

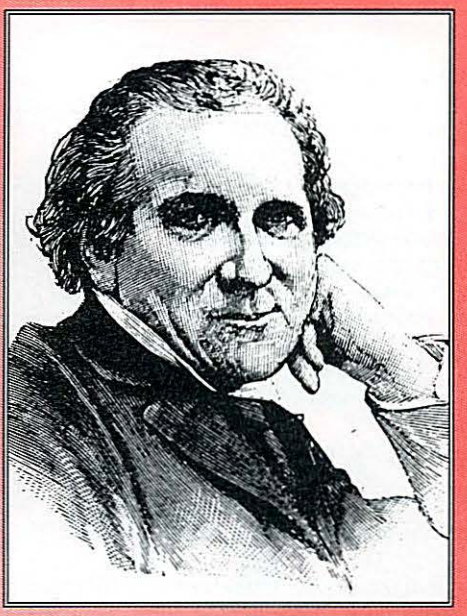
In the late 1880s, Edison began to turn his attention to photography and related fields. In 1888, he invented the kinetoscope, a machine that employed a rapid succession of static images to create the illusion of motion.

Role-Playing
Edison's keen mind has often been compared to that of London's Sherlock Holmes. Both men possess a talent for deduction and analysis that is nothing short of miraculous.

In the case of the Englishman, this process runs toward the past. Upon examining an object, Holmes is able quickly to recognize the many twists and turns of fate that have brought that item to his attention.

Edison's mind, however, works in the opposite fashion. When presented with a new device or theory, the American is able to see many ways in which it might be put to use or modified. It is impossible to say whether either talent is more valuable than the other.

Those who know Edison casually seldom have anything but praise for the inventor. Those who are more familiar with him, however, know that Edison has his share of bitterness. While he cannot help but respect the talents of Nichola Tesla and George Westinghouse, there is no love lost between them. This is especially true of Tesla, who worked for Edison briefly after coming to this country from his native Hungary. As is often the case when such powerful intellects are placed in proximity, a great deal of competition follows. This passed beyond rivalry and became a general dislike, if not an outright hatred.



Forbidden Lore
As mentioned earlier, the brilliant Nichola Tesla worked for Edison. During this time, Edison began to suspect that Tesla was being less than honest with him about the nature of his insights and techniques. When he confronted Tesla with his suspicions, a bitter argument followed. Tesla stormed out into the night and cut all ties with Edison.

Before he left, however, Edison was able to get a quick look at some of Tesla's notebooks. What he saw there convinced him that there was more to the young Hungarian than met the eye. While Edison doesn't know the details of Tesla's past, he has vowed to learn the source of that worthy's technical skill and master it for himself.

Nichola Tesla

Alignment: Neutral Good
Class: Tradesman (Scientist)
XP Level: 10

Strength: 11
Dexterity: 13
Constitution: 10
Intelligence: 18
Wisdom: 15
Charisma: 10

Armor Class: 10
Hit Points: 35
THAC0: 16
No. of Attacks: 1

Weapon Proficiencies: Derringer, navy pistol, hunting knife, and rapier

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Electricity (16), lang: German (18), lang: Hungarian (native), lang: English (18), chemistry (18), biology (18), academician (15), engineering (18), physics (18), and clockwork (13).

Background
Nichola Tesla was born in 1856 in Smiljan, a city that lies within the modern borders of Yugoslavia. He received a solid, formal education both at the Polytechnic School in Graz, Austria, and then at the University of Prague. Following his graduation, he embarked upon a career as an electrical engineer.

In 1884, he emigrated to the United States and eventually became a nationalized citizen. For a brief time after his arrival in America, he was employed by Thomas Edison and assisted that worthy in some very important research into the nature and uses of electricity.

In 1888 Tesla created the first practical system for generating and transmitting alternating current. The importance of this discovery was clear to such far-sighted men as George Westinghouse, who persuaded Tesla to sell him the patent for the device.

The 1893 Columbian Exposition features a grand demonstration of Tesla's device and Westinghouse's dreams for the future. With the theme of the show being electricity, such an exhibit is among the highlights of the show.

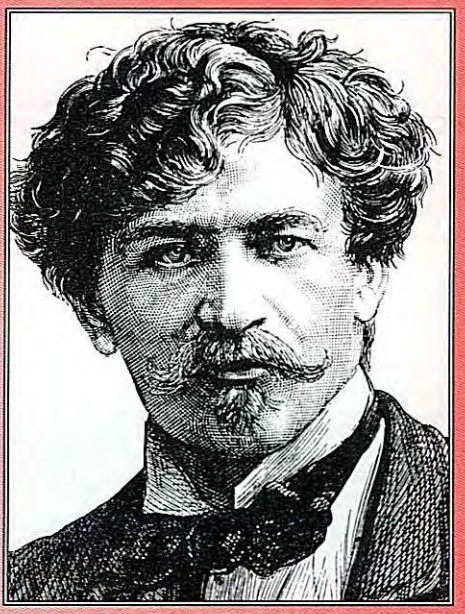
By the time the close of the 1890s, Tesla had shown his brilliance time and time again. Indeed, within two years of their display at the 1893 Exposition, Tesla's alternating current generators were installed at Niagara Falls.

Role-Playing
Tesla is a man obsessed with science, technology, and electricity. If there was ever a model upon which the stereotypical mad scientist was based, it is Tesla. To him, the wonders of technology are greater than anything else the world has to offer.

He is no fool, but the everyday affairs of business and politics mean little to him. Some see him as grim and determined, others as darkly eccentric, and a few as a dangerous scientific renegade whose inventions are far more dangerous than they are practical.

For his part, Tesla cares nothing for the opinions of others. His life is devoted to science and the passion that he feels for it is far greater than any love ever felt by a man for a woman.

Forbidden Lore
Tesla is a man haunted by the deeds of his ancestors. Some years ago, he came into possession of a trunk that had been locked away in his home for decades. When he asked about it, his parents warned him to forget it.



Such an admonition only fueled the curiosity in Tesla's inquisitive heart, and he forced open the great box. Inside he found journals, blueprints, and countless handwritten notes. Upon close examination, Tesla discovered that these documents told the incredible story of a forgotten ancestor, Victor Frankenstein, and the terrible monster that he had constructed nearly a century before.

Long before he had even come close to understanding the enormity of the task that lay before him, Tesla had vowed to follow in Frankenstein's footsteps. Unlike that tragic figure, however, he would not fail in his attempts to harness the power of electricity for the creation of life. Indeed, the young Tesla swore that this would be only the first of the miracles that he would bring the world.

What Tesla could not have known, however, was that the legacy of Victor Frankenstein included far more than simply a chest of documents and diagrams. In a remote region of the arctic, a place no man had ever visited, Frankenstein's monster clung to a pitiful, forsaken life. Early in the 1890s, when Tesla began to duplicate some of Frankenstein's experiments, something stirred within the creature's wretched soul. Slowly, it began to trudge across the frozen wastes of the polar ice cap, dimly aware that some descendant of Victor Frankenstein was again at work upon the forbidden experiments that had brought so much suffering into the world almost a century before.

Little Egypt

Alignment:	Chaotic Evil
Class:	Mystic / Succubus
XP Level:	6
Strength:	14
Dexterity:	18
Constitution:	14
Intelligence:	16
Wisdom:	16
Charisma:	18
Armor Class:	0
Hit Points:	30
THAC0:	15
No. of Attacks:	2
Damage/Attack:	1d3/1d3
Magic Resistance:	30%

Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger and derringer

Nonweapon Proficiencies: Athletics: contortionist (18), dancing (18), forbidden lore (16), lang: Arabic (native), lang: English (12), mesmerism (18), and spiritcraft (16).

Spheres: All (minor), Charm (major), Necromancy (minor), Protection (minor), Elemental Fire (minor).

Spells
1st Level (5): *Command* (x2), *cause fear* (x1), *detect good, protection from good.* 2nd Level (5): *Enthrall, hold person* (x2), *defile, fire trap.* 3rd Level (2): *Bestow curse, emotion control*

Background
If the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 is to be remembered for any single thing, it will almost certainly be the dancing of Fahreda Mahzar. Calling herself Little Egypt, this stunningly beautiful woman has been shocking fairgoers with exotic dance routines imported from Arabia. The press and public were instantly taken with Little Egypt, and terms like belly dancing or hootchie-kootchie were promptly coined to describe her performances.

Reports of her very sensual dances have appeared in newspapers around the country. With these accounts came instant scandal as the good people of the United States expressed their outrage at these primitive dances. Of course, no doubt to justify this righteous indignation, the public has turned out in record numbers to see Little Egypt dance.

Role-Playing
Fahreda Mahzar is a passionate woman who makes excellent use of both her physical beauty and charming personality. Those who meet here are almost universally won over and soon profess their adoration of her.

Just as the attendees of the Exposition find the frenzied dances of Little Egypt to be captivating and unique, so too is she fascinated by the people and culture of the United States. In her spare time, she enjoys travelling around Chicago and the surrounding areas. There seems to be no aspect of American life that she is not interested in.

It would be impossible for so beautiful and charming a woman to avoid drawing a crowd of suitors. The attentions of these young men are eagerly accepted by the dancer, although she seldom keeps company with the same man for more than a few days. It would be quite an understatement to refer to Little Egypt as anything less than a heart-breaker.

Forbidden Lore
In truth, Fahreda Mahzar is not a creature of this world. She is a minion of the Red Death as sinister and terrible as any that haunts the night. In ancient times, creatures of her ilk have worn the name hora, lamia, brizo, and empusa. To the scholars of Gothic Earth, she is known as a succubus.

Although she maintains her human form almost continuously, Mahzar's true appearance includes glowing red eyes and large, bat-like wings. In either form, however, she has many terrible powers that make her more than a match for any band of adventurers. In addition to the magical spells described earlier in this entry, Mahzar has all the powers associated with her kind.

Chief among these is the ability to drain life energy from those she kisses. Each time her lips touch those of a mortal, she has the option of draining an experience level from her lover. If she bestows this kiss during a moment of passion, her victim must make an Ability Check on Wisdom (with a –4 penalty) or fail to notice what has happened to him. If this is the case, Mahzar is free to continue feeding upon her paramour.

As a succubus, Little Egypt is able to become ethereal (as if through the use of oil of etherealness) and employ the *charm person, clairaudience, ESP, plane shift, shapechange,* and *suggestion* spells at will. It is the *shapechange* ability that allows her to maintain her human appearance and it cannot be used to assume other forms.

In addition to these powers, she can be harmed only by +2 or better magical weapons and is immune to damage from any fire- or heat-based attack, whether magical or mundane. Like all succubi, Mahzar is never surprised.

As mentioned above, Little Egypt is also a skilled mystic. She does not, however, employ the usual casting techniques to invoke her spells. In order to work her magic, Mahzar must complete a specific dance. Each of these dances takes one round to complete, with the spell taking effect at the start of the next round. While other Mystics call upon the nameless spirits of the afterlife to empower their spells, all of Mahzar's magic comes from the spirits of those eternally cursed souls who have perished to satisfy her lascivious appetite. ❑

Weasel Games

Triumphant Losers

by Jennifer A. Smith

Would everyone who is a weasel gamer please stand up? If this question were asked at a gaming convention, I believe all the seats would be empty. So for all of you avid gamers, this article isn't addressed to you. Instead I am addressing it to your wives, girl friends, friends that aren't avid gamers, and all of your other victims.

I have been asked to comment on my husband's "Weasel Game" articles on the behalf of all weasel victims. Who would best know the sting of defeat by a weasel than the wife of the grand weasel himself? If you have followed his articles to this point, you will recall that I have been mentioned several times in reference to his weaseliness. What you have not been told is my side of the story ... which brings me to the point of my article.

I have lived 18 years with Lester and have played numerous games with him. It was only after several years of always losing and feeling frustrated that I decided something had to change. As a victim of a weasel, you may think that you have to either give up gaming altogether, or just learn to take the beatings. Well, I'm here to tell you that there is a third alternative. I call this my kamikaze approach.

The difference between my kamikaze approach and just learning to take the beating is an issue of *control.* With my approach, you control when and how you die, and who you take with you when you do.

There are a few points to learn before you can truly have control. You first must give up your focus on winning the game and concentrate instead on your own enjoyment. Enjoying a game doesn't mean you have to win. The second thing you must remember is that the person you are playing against is out to win the game any way he can. The weasel player will assume that everyone else is also out to win the game. But you are there only to thwart his efforts and have a great time doing it. There will seem to be no rhyme or reason to any of your moves. But your goal is to be in the wrong place at the right time. You have to look for ways to mess up the weasel player. Your whole purpose is focused not on winning, but on how often you can get in the weasel's way.

Let me give a few examples of how I have used the kamikaze approach in playing games. The best example I can give you is when I play *Car Wars.* I love to play this game because it allows me the opportunity to vent some real deep frustrations in a safe and enjoyable way. One time Lester asked me if I would play a scenario in which he and a friend had several motorcycles and I had one car. I put the majority of the armor on the back of my car, some on each side, and none in front. When the game started, I accelerated my car until I had it going at a pretty fast speed. Lester and his friend were right behind me, going even faster in order to catch up. I waited until they got right up behind me, and then hit my brakes. One motorcycle smashed into the car, doing little damage to the rear armor, but flattening out real nice across it. Two of the bikes then went by on each side, and I swerved to the right, sideswiping one on that side and shooting the engine out of the other. By the time the last two got slowed down enough to turn around, I had accelerated again and had run them over.

You first must give up your focus on winning the game and concentrate instead on your own enjoyment. Enjoying a game doesn't mean you have to win.

I won this game of *Car Wars* not because I was aiming at that goal but because I set out with the attitude that I didn't care if I lost, and I aimed to take as many of the motorcycles with me as I possibly could.

I play *Wiz Wars* sometimes with Lester and some of his other weasel friends, but I have never won. If I would let it, this game could frustrate me very badly, so to avoid being frustrated I take on a very fatalistic attitude. I play mean. Anytime I can steal treasures, block passages, or conjure walls to shut someone off from their home base, I do. I work to pit one player against another. Not only is this quite enjoyable, it can also be a real advantage in getting ahead. Just remember that getting ahead is only a side issue. Your primary goal is just to make the weasel's life miserable.

There is an exception to my kamikaze approach. You should never play a game that a weasel himself has designed. I learned this lesson the hard way playing *Temple of the Beastmen* with my husband. Shortly after Lester designed this game, he asked me to play it with him. I lost miserably. Lester knew every weaselly thing there was to do because he designed them into the game. Every weaselly thing he could possibly do to me, he did. Lester collapsed a corridor so I would be trapped on the lowest level, and then discarded forever the one card that could help me. Just for the record, I never play *Temple of the Beastmen* anymore with Lester.

Never fight your enemy behind their lines. They know the territory too well. If you should suddenly find yourself in this position, then I suggest you pretend to get sick and have to quit or go home. I know this doesn't seem sportsmanlike, but remember it's self-survival we're talking about here—and at all costs you must maintain control.

Yes, these are weasel ways of doing things, but to fight an enemy one must know the enemy. I believe that everyone has some form of weaseliness contained within them. It doesn't matter if you use it to win a game or just thwart the effort of another player. It is all a form of weaseliness, just with a different emphasis. So remember all you victims of weasel gamers: you have it within yourself to be not just losers ... but triumphant losers!

❑

The Living Galaxy

The Last of Character Bonding, SF Campaigns, and TV Shows

by Roger E. Moore

This installment ends our look at prime-time TV shows of interest to SF gamers. In particular, we're looking for creative ways in which Game Masters can give player characters common settings, foes, and goals to keep those PCs (and their players) working together for long, enjoyable campaigns.

As before, I've categorized some TV shows according to the campaigns they produce if used as models for science-fiction game set-ups. Even a non-SF show has much to offer GMs and players contemplating a particular campaign style.

Much of this information was taken from *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows, 1946-Present,* by Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh (Ballantine Books, 1992). All the errors are my own, of course.

Author's notes: Although the proper style for writing the title of a TV show is to use quotes, I've switched to italics since so many shows are involved and space is limited. Also, I was rather liberal at times in categorizing "Mundane" and "SF" shows; most fantasy shows were put in the "SF" group, and most ultramodern and high-tech shows went into "Mundane."

"Synd." means the show was syndicated; "n/d" means no show dates are available. Some dates are approximate (e.g., 199?); I was unable to get accurate information. I did not list rerun dates.

Combat Team

Mundane Models: *Baa Baa Black Sheep/Black Sheep Squadron* (NBC 1976-8), *Combat* (ABC 1962-7), *The Dirty Dozen* (Fox 1988), *Garrison's Gorillas* (ABC 1967-8), *Jericho* (CBS 1966-7), *McHale's Navy* (ABC 1962-6), *O.S.S.* (ABC 1957-8), *The Rat Patrol* (ABC 1966-8), *Tour of Duty* (CBS 1987-90), *Twelve O'Clock High* (ABC 1964-7).

SF Models: *Battlestar Galactica* (ABC 1978-1980), *BattleTech* (animated, synd. 1994-now), *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* (NBC 1979-81).

Characters: All characters in the Combat Team set-up are soldiers in a military unit engaged in an overt, long-running conflict with another military force. These characters are either "foot" infantrymen or else pilot a number of small combat vehicles such as land rovers (*The Rat Patrol*), aircraft (*Baa Baa Black Sheep, Twelve O'Clock High*), helicopters (*Tour of Duty*), or fast attack boats (*McHale's Navy*).

Teamwork and training are paramount. Characters cannot be renegades or lone wolves, except in campaigns focusing on small-unit or solo activities such as sniper and recon work. Even then, characters must be disciplined. Determination, drive, and resourcefulness are prized. Given the highly technical nature of modern and futuristic warfare, highly skilled and intelligent characters are greatly desired over those with purely physical powers, such as strength.

Two of the three SF shows noted often focused on the activities of the pilots of small fighter spacecraft. No SF ground-combat shows have been produced beyond the *BattleTech* cartoon, though GMs may find many tales of futuristic combat units and battles in SF novels like Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* or David Drake's *Hammer's Slammers.* The potential of powered-armor or tanker combat units has not been exploited on TV.

An interesting recent twist on the Combat Team set-up was started by the 1960s movie *The Dirty Dozen,* in which certain military convicts under long sentences or awaiting execution were allowed to join high-risk commando-type units. If the men survive, they go free or get reduced sentences. This concept is not new (an early modern-media version appears in the 1950s fantasy movie *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad*) and is hardly realistic in its extreme form, but it makes for fascinating campaign play and spawned several TV series (*The Dirty Dozen, Garrison's Gorillas*).

Another twist concerns the mixing of espionage and a "hot war," as seen in *Jericho* and *O.S.S.* Except for leaving secret agents free to commit the wildest havoc behind enemy lines (under certain circumstances, of course), this type of campaign is much like the Big Brother's Troubleshooters set-up noted earlier.

Shared Goals: Defend your nation and defeat the armed forces of your nation's enemies through all available military means, following the orders of your chain of command and your own best judgment.

Setting: Wartime campaigns from TV shows tend to be either overland, oceanic, or aerial, often mixing elements of each. (*Baa Baa Black Sheep,* for instance, was about World War II fighter pilots based on an island in the Pacific Ocean.) Science-fiction campaigns can add space to this mixture, though one particular setting should dominate, based on the types of characters in the campaign. Spacecraft pilots will fight in space battles, powered-armor infantry will fight land battles, etc. The combat theater should be broad and varied enough to provide for a great many different missions.

Commentary: Wartime series have been rather rare on network TV, for reasons that aren't hard to fathom. The most popular TV war series of all, *M*A*S*H,* is not the best model for an RPG campaign because of its medical viewpoint and philosophical orientation. We will pass on *China Beach,* a series on doctors in Vietnam, for the same reason.

The combat set-up described here differs from Big Ship combat campaigns (detailed in this column in issues #90 and 95) in that nearly all combat vehicles used by PCs are small, occupied for less than a day at a time, and cannot serve well as homes—unlike a Big Ship. A bomber, fighter, land rover, and PT boat have more in common with each other than they do with larger naval vessel like a submarine, aircraft carrier, battleship, or destroyer.

There is a tendency in written SF to duplicate conditions from particular real-world wars, and the Vietnam war has left a profound mark on SF combat fiction (e.g., Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War*). Borrowing historical combat settings for an SF campaign was explored in this column in issue #95. Note that most of the mundane TV show examples

here depict situations from World War II, which is largely portrayed as a "good" (popular, justified) war. The TV shows on the Vietnam War portray it as a "bad" (unpopular, questionable) war. The profound effect of national opinion about a war will certainly affect the role-playing of all characters.

Examples: The military possibilities offered in SFRPGs are legion. Look at the *Star Wars,* BUGHUNTERS®, *Galactos Barrier, Robotech, Macross II, Mekton II / Mekton Z, BattleTech / MechWarrior, The Mechanoids, Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0., Aliens, Legionnaire, GURPS Space, Traveller / MegaTraveller / Traveller: The New Era, Living Steel, Star Trek,* and *2300 AD,* games, for starters. Altered-Earth games, like the GAMMA WORLD®, *Rifts, Shadowrun,* and *Torg* systems, include intense combat and professional armies.

The "mecha" combat games stand apart from all others in playing style, but TV shows still offer many scenario ideas, character types, and background bits worth borrowing for such campaigns. (You can always watch the *BattleTech* cartoon, at least, and some TV stations feature anime with this theme.)

Delta Force, the out-of-print RPG from Task Force Games that was mentioned earlier, would be nice to examine for ideas using a military set-up. Various espionage, near-future/ultramodern, and cyberpunk games (*Ninjas & Superspies,* TOP SECRET/S.I™., KROMOSOME, *Twilight: 2000, Merc: 2000, Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0*) support military campaigns with an SF flavor. The TOP SECRET/S.I. game includes the Commando supplement and adventures, all of high quality. If you'd like to add an SF element to recent past history, think about adding a few kinks to Palladium's Vietnam-era *Recon* campaign.

If your favored SFRPG has combat miniatures rules for tabletop gaming, consider the powerful visual bonus that would be for a military campaign. Not many SFRPGs, however, have such rules. The *Striker II* rules for *Traveller: The Next Era* and the *Star Wars Miniatures Battles* rules for *Star Wars: The RPG* are two good examples, but there are few others. The *BattleTech* game, of course, is founded on miniatures combat, which makes warfare much easier to handle and more—um—attractive to the players.

Resistance Movement

Mundane Models: *Amerika* (? n/d), *The Young Rebels* (ABC 1970-1).

SF Models: *War of the Worlds* (synd. 1988-90), *V* (NBC 1984-5).

Characters: A "classical" Resistance Movement campaign includes player characters who, prior to the invasion and occupation of their homeland, were not professional soldiers. They were civilians or poorly trained militia, average people who found themselves in the extraordinary circumstance of being conquered subjects. An excellent example of this is seen in the movie *Red Dawn,* in which high-school students take up arms during a hypothetical invasion of America by Communist nations. (This theme appeared in the subsequent TV miniseries *Amerika.*)

Shared Goals: Defend your fellow citizens and their property, and defeat the armed forces and plans of your nation's conquerors through all available means, military or otherwise, following the orders of your chain of command (if any exists) or your own best judgment.

Setting: A nation occupied by brutal enemy forces, human or alien, is a popular setting here. The two science-fiction models and the *Amerika* miniseries use this concept. The setting, even if initially "mundane," now presents a strange mixture of the familiar and the alien. I often think of the amusing promotional photo for the movie *Red Dawn* that featured a Soviet tank and troops beneath a McDonald's golden arches.

A second possible setting is that of a colony attempting to break away from its "parent" nation and achieve independence. The American War of Independence (as shown—badly—in *The Young Rebels*) is an example of this, as were the successful anti-Spanish rebellions led by Símon Bolívar in South America.

A third possible setting would be a nation undergoing civil war, in which a geographic section is attempting to break away from the main nation; think of the American Civil War or the troubles within Russia today. Also consider a campaign set in a nation whose government was abruptly changed to a repressive dictatorship, as has happened to a number of Caribbean, Central and South American, southeast Asian, and African nations.

A fascinating and powerful campaign can be derived from making the players' own nation and home town the setting of the Resistance Movement set-up, as was done in the West End Games' RPG, *The Price of Freedom* (a *Red Dawn* clone). The players will identify strongly with the setting and be able to visualize it with ease. Adding alien invaders, as in the two SF models cited earlier, cements the set-up for a long-running and thrilling campaign.

Commentary: The best historical model for campaigns of this type is the French Resistance of World War II. A GM considering a campaign of this sort should read at least one general account of this force's activities, which were quite complex. Other equally valid models include the operation of the Underground Railroad during the American Civil War, by which escaped slaves could reach freedom in the Union states or Canada, and the activities of Norwegian, Polish, and Russian partisans against Nazi conquerors.

Typical campaign activities will involve espionage, ambushes, sabotage, smuggling, prison-camp rescues, thefts, assassinations, and any other small-unit action the GM can think up. The PCs will usually face a powerful foe that can outshoot and outrace them, and so must be clever to the Nth degree. The PCs will also be increasingly sought by enemy authorities as their reputation and activities grow, which can lead to abrupt campaign termination if the GM and players aren't careful.

It is worth pointing out that though Americans today tend to think that Colonial Americans were terribly oppressed by the British, the truth of the matter is very different. Colonial Americans (except for their slaves, of course) were actually quite free and did very much as they pleased. Until less than a decade before the Revolution, most Americans were happy to be part of the British Empire. (I felt obliged to add this, thanks to the bad example *The Young Rebels* sets for historical accuracy.)

Examples: A few SF games lend themselves to this campaign style in particular, though most can be adapted to it without much trouble. *The Price of Freedom, Day of the Phoenix,* and *The Mechanoids* fit it (from West End Games, Fantasy Games Unlimited, and Palladium, respectively; the first two games are out of print). West End Games' *Torg* rules take in this situation perfectly: All Earth has been conquered. Other games of interest here include the *Twilight: 2000* (post-World War III), *Robotech* (alien-conquered Earth), *2300 AD* (Kafer-conquered worlds), *Star Wars* (Imperium-conquered worlds),

and *Star Trek* (Klingon- or Romulan-conquered worlds). The Knights of Genetic Purity make great oppressors in the GAMMA WORLD game, as do the Coalition forces in the *Rifts* game. If there's an evil empire around, there are bound to be freedom fighters, too.

Castaways

Mundane Models: *Gilligan's Island* (CBS 1964-7), *The New People* (ABC 1969-70), *Swiss Family Robinson* (ABC 1975-6).

SF Models: *Land of the Giants* (ABC 1968-70), *Lost in Space* (CBS 1965-8), *Planet of the Apes* (CBS 1974).

Characters: Castaways, unlike Pioneer Families, aren't prepared for their wilderness-survival role. They need not be related to one another, though the image of a castaway family establishing a new home in unexplored wilderness (as per the famed Swiss Family Robinson) is a potent one. A castaway group can otherwise be an assortment of unrelated people, aliens, and pets who find themselves stranded following an accident that disables their vessel in a remote, uncivilized region. Castaways are rarely prepared for their wilderness survival role, as they had fully planned on arriving somewhere more civilized.

The uncompleted plans and unresolved personal problems that certain passengers had before their stranding might strongly affect their goals and actions later. A divorcing couple, a foreign spy with captured documents, two cops bringing a killer to justice, an escaped experimental robot in human form—these are the sorts of folks caught in the middle of their lives by this sort of emergency. How they work things out is up to them.

Shared Goals: Maintain your group's survival and growth in a hostile and unexplored environment, attempting to either return to safer and more civilized territory later or establish a new colony in the region (see Pioneer Family).

Setting: The setting for a Castaways campaign is usually even more hostile than for a Pioneer Family campaign. No elements of friendly civilization are usually present, and characters are left to their own devices to accomplish their goals of survival and escape. The most typical settings include deserted islands and unexplored planets. Two TV shows noted above were set on worlds dominated by hostile races, forcing castaways to scavenge and steal in order to survive.

Commentary: I know that the mere mention of *Gilligan's Island* will send some SF fans into shock, but it needs to be said. The show featured distinctive characters, certainly more distinctive than the members of the *Swiss Family Robinson*. And, as we all know, successful and enjoyable role-playing depends upon having PCs who stand out. That said, we'll leave Gilligan and his island alone.

In most SF games, being marooned is likely to be a temporary situation. There's a universe to explore, after all, and few people want to be stuck on a deserted island, no matter what the GM wants. (This column in issue #71 covers the "marooned" campaign idea.) However, some GMs may find players willing to try this in a game, especially in campaigns where the rest of the world has pretty much fallen apart (see below). The *Lost in Space* "family model" might also be attractive, especially to die-hard role-players. I recommend that the GM check out any ideas for a long-term campaign with players first.

If there's an evil empire around, there are bound to be freedom fighters, too.

One especially interesting TV show that started with a *Castaways* theme was the short-lived *The New People*. A plane load of young adults crashes on a Pacific island once meant for atomic testing; abandoned buildings and mannequins, meant to measure atomic blast effects, are everywhere. Instead of trying to go home, the youths decide to set up their own civilization on the island, abandoning the modern world in perfect '60s counterculture style. Life was not dull for them, thanks to storms, infighting, survival needs, and occasional visits from the outside world. (One of the youths turned out to be pregnant, too.) This, like *Lost in Space*, obviously begins to toe into the Pioneer Family set-up from last issue—a nice transitional campaign.

Examples: This set-up might work very well with near-future SFRPGs like the *Twilight: 2000* or *Merc: 2000* games. These games feature lots of survival equipment, the rest of the world is a mess, and there are plenty of places where one can get lost during a nuclear war. Look at *Gateway to the Spanish Main*, a *Twilight: 2000* module set in the Caribbean, and see if it doesn't give you some ideas. The chaotic world conditions of the *Rifts* and *Torg* campaigns might also nudge players into accepting a Castaways campaign, especially if they get an interesting island.

At the extreme, PCs can be forced into the Castaways role because they are the only people left on their world or nation. Suppose the rest of the human population was wiped out, except for the player characters and some NPCs. (Go see the movie *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil* for inspiration, or the recent Stephen King TV miniseries now on video, *The Stand*.) Catchy concept!

In any event, the GM would do well to set up large lists of equipment for PCs to use for exploration and survival. "Looting" tools, weapons, and vehicles from other game systems and adapting them to your own system is strongly advised to provide variety. The *GURPS* game, because of its many supplements, would easily allow for a Castaways campaign of any sort.

Itinerants/Mobile Business

Mundane Models: *The A-Team* (NBC 1983-7), *The Adventure of Kit Carson* (synd. 1951-5), *Alias Smith and Jones* (ABC 1971-3), *Branded* (NBC 1965-6), Bronco (ABC 1958-62), *The Buccaneers* (CBS 1956-7), *Cheyenne* (ABC 1955-63), *The Cisco Kid* (synd. 1950-6), *The Fugitive* (ABC 1963-7), *The Guns of Will Sonnett* (ABC 1967-9), *Have Gun Will Travel* (CBS 1957-63), *Here's Boomer* (NBC 1980-2), *The Iron Horse* (ABC 1966-1968), *Kung Fu* (ABC 1972-5), *The Littlest Hobo* (synd.?, n/d), *The Manhunter* (CBS 1974-5), *The Master* (NBC 1984), *Maverick* (ABC 1957-62), *Movin' On* (NBC 1974-6), *Paper Moon* (ABC 1974-5), *The Quest* (NBC 1976), *Rawhide* (CBS 1959-62), *The Rebel* (ABC/NBC 1959-62), *Route 66* (CBS 1960-4), *Run for Your Life* (NBC 1965-8), *Soldiers of Fortune* (synd. 1955-6), *Tales of Wells Fargo* (NBC 1957-62), *Three for the Road* (CBS 1975), *Wagon Train* (NBC/ABC 1957-65), *The Young Riders* (ABC 1989-?).

SF Models: *Doctor Who* (BBC

1963+, U.S. synd. 1978+), *Fantastic Journey* (NBC 1977), *Highlander* (? 199?-?), *The Immortal* (ABC 1970-1), *The Invaders* (ABC 1967-8), *Jonny Quest* (animated, ABC 1964-5), *Logan's Run* (CBS 1977-8), *Lost in Space* (CBS 1965-8), *Otherworld* (CBS 1985), *Quantum Leap* (NBC 1989-9?), *Quark* (NBC 1978), *Salvage 1* (ABC 1979), *The Time Tunnel* (ABC 1966-7), *Werewolf* (Fox 1987-8).

Characters: I was originally planning to separate Itinerants from characters who work for a Mobile Business, but decided the similarities between the two campaigns were stronger than their differences. Travel is the all-consuming element in either one.

Itinerants are rootless wayfarers, often unemployed or holding only temporary jobs. They might head for a distant destination or else have no ultimate destination at all except to see the universe, locate a much-wanted item, or escape a foe or threatening situation. Itinerants might be pursued by law-enforcement agents, criminal enemies, aliens, or monsters; they might be seeking experience, freedom, a lost family member, or a lost and valuable artifact. They are often loners, good for solo-player campaigns.

If part of a mobile business, the PCs are part of a civilian company that requires lots of purposeful travel. Knowledge of combat is helpful (especially if the PCs are mercenaries) but not always required; large-scale battles aren't part of the campaign picture. The characters could be far-voyaging merchants, salvage experts, freight or passenger haulers, overland railroad or highway builders, or the like. They draw regular salaries or commissions, regard themselves as regular company employees, and have definite missions to fulfill and orders to carry out.

Shared Goals: (Itinerant) Accomplish your personal goals without the benefit of a fixed home or base, while supporting when possible the goals of your traveling companions, if any. (Mobile Business) Maintain the survival and growth of your mobile business by working closely with your peers, superiors, and subordinates, handling difficult situations by whatever legal means are available.

Setting: Because the essence of either campaign is travel, the campaign can take place anywhere so long as a large area with a great many interesting adventuring locales is involved. Designing this set-up will test the GM's patience and creative talents to their limits, but the payoff is often considerable as almost all players like travel. Most TV shows listed here shift their episode locations across the Old West, the United States, or even the entire globe. In SF shows, characters might cross time as well as space, or voyage into alternate universes.

The Mobile Business campaign has much in common with the Mobile Home Base campaign, except that the characters don't necessarily live in their vehicles, which are often small (trucks, motorcycles, pioneer wagons, horses). In *The Buccaneers,* the vehicle was a pirate ship; in *The Iron Horse,* it was a train. The main character in *The Iron Horse,* by the way, was in the process of building his railroad, which he'd won in a card game.

Commentary: The individual campaigns that can be run using this theme are difficult to categorize, since there are so many possibilities. We have *Doctor Who,* about a renegade, meddling Time Lord; *Fantastic Journey,* about scientists crossing universes through the Bermuda Triangle; *Highlander* and *The Immortal,* about immortals who are pursued by or pursuing their enemies; *The Invaders,* about a man who discovers a secret alien invasion of Earth but cannot get anyone to believe him; *Quantum Leap* and *The Time Tunnel,* about time-lost researchers; and *Werewolf,* about a lycanthrope trying to end his curse. Even nonhumans get into the act, as shown by the canine heroes of *The Littlest Hobo* and *Here's Boomer.*

The "mundane" travelers are often just as complex. There are gamblers, bounty hunters, mercenaries, unjustly accused fugitives, footloose youths, cattle drovers, wagon masters, free-lance photographers, and people who believe they have only a short time to live (and so want to pack a lot of living into that time). All could be shoe-horned into SF campaigns.

The GM of such a campaign should be aware early on that few encounters and NPCs will be developed in depth during the course of the campaign. Because the PCs are always on the move, they won't stick around anywhere long enough to explore an area in detail or get to know passers-by beyond a surface meeting.

There will also be few opportunities for spin-off, cause-and-effect adventures. In the old *Star Trek* TV show, few (if any) episodes were directly derived from earlier episodes. You have to wait until the movie *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* to see any consequences appear.

Examples: It would save a lot of trouble to note that almost any SFRPG could not only support a far-travels campaign but also keep it going in style. Only SF set-ups with very limited settings would be poor choices—for example, the AMAZING ENGINE *Metamorphosis Alpha to Omega* game, which takes place entirely aboard a starship.

One interesting RPG adventure in this regard was the *GURPS Flight 13* adventure, about a planeload of passengers who find themselves hurled uncontrollably from universe to universe—as all the while their fuel runs out. This remarkable adventure, based upon an episode of *The Twilight Zone,* could be used to spin off a long series of nightmarish, nonstop adventures across ever-changing terrain in time and space.

One version of GDW's old *Traveller* game had a short introductory "adventure" in which the PCs are sent out across the galaxy to check on every planet there is, as part of a Grand Survey of worlds. I doubt that any playing group ever accomplished this mission or came close to it, but the idea certainly fits within this campaign type.

And More and More and More

Why stop with these? Television has many other thematic possibilities to offer, some of them useful as secondary plot lines in other types of campaigns. A few examples follow.

Generational: An interesting SF campaign could be run in which the action was episodic, each adventure taking place years apart and building on previous events, possibly involving long-lived, "hibernating," time-jumping, or immortal characters as well as the descendants of past major PCs. This type of campaign brings to mind the various historical novels of James Michener (*Hawaii, The Source, Alaska, Centennial*) and Edward Rutherford's *Sarum: The Novel of England,* as well as certain science-fiction novels (H.G. Wells' *When the Sleeper Wakes,* James Blish's *Cities in Flight,* George Zebrowski's *Macrolife,* Larry Niven's Known Space tales of Louis Wu, Robert Heinlein's Future History tales of Lazarus Long). It would obviously involve multiple characters if the aging process is not delayed or removed, and the landscape (cultural as well as physi-

cal) could change greatly over time. [TV: *Centennial* (NBC 1978-1980), *Roots* (ABC 1977), *Roots: The Next Generations* (ABC 1979)]

Political: Why not run an SF campaign in which some of the major characters are political figures, like presidents, prime ministers, governors, or mayors? This would work well in a multi-character set-up in which the alternate characters were the ones carrying out the missions or assignments given them by the politician PCs. A variation on this theme was first mentioned in this column in issue #90. There, a set-up was noted in which PCs for a "big ship" campaign could be drawn from several departments aboard a gigantic starship, with each group of characters acting in concert with or under the orders of other groups.

The difficulties in working out a political SF set-up are many, but this could be fascinating. Many modern techno-thrillers have strong political elements begging to be borrowed for game use, and even straightforward political novelists such as Allen Drury (*The Promise of Joy*) and Richard Condon (*The Manchurian Candidate*) have much to offer. However, be aware that you are looking for books about politicians, not merely politics. In SF novels, look for works like Kim Stanley Robinson's *Red Mars / Green Mars / Blue Mars* series, Heinlein's *Double Star,* and Ursula K. LeGuin's *The Dispossessed.* [TV: *Benson* (ABC 1979-1986), *The Governor & J.J.* (CBS 1969-72), *Mr. President* (Fox 1987-8)]

Prisoners: I suppose I can't see conducting a long-term campaign around this theme; prison life is deadly dull. On a short-term basis, however, the PCs could be prisoners interned for unjust reasons, thus having extra motivation to escape. Or, PCs could have been justifiably jailed for minor crimes, but are being treated far worse than their crimes merit.

A mix of prisoners and prison authorities as PCs might be allowed if a third force, such as an invading enemy, threatens the world where the prison exists, forcing criminals and guards to take up arms together to defend themselves and win their freedom. A prisoner-of-war campaign would also be interesting, after the fashion of movies like *The Great Escape* (though this obviously implies that the PCs will be leaving the POW camp before long).

A prison setting is obviously needed, meaning the entire campaign area will be of very limited size. Still, one can also make do with an island complex of sufficient size or a prison set on a geographically isolated region (a wasteland planet like Mars, for instance, or a peninsula blocked from the mainland by mountains).

Several historical prisons are of interest because of their isolation and unusual nature. Alcatraz, a prison-island in San Francisco Bay, and Devil's Island, a French prison-island off the coast of French Guiana, were legendary for being escape-proof. Some real-world research would produce a bonanza for interested GMs here; look at World War II and Vietnam POW camps, the Soviet gulag system, and the old British penal colonies of Australia and Tasmania.

Four published SF adventures are of interest in this field: GDW's early *Traveller* adventure, *Prison Planet;* Iron Crown's *Death Valley Free Prison* for the *Cyberspace* game; Steve Jackson Games's *GURPS The Prisoner;* and *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0.'s* Sub-Attica, an undersea prison. One fantasy-RPG adventure of interest (given the appropriate conversions) is AD&D® module A4 *In the Dungeons of the Slave Lords.*

Several SF movies have dealt with prison life in typical thriller fashion (*Escape from New York, No Escape*), but only one TV show has done so (*The Prisoner*). SF novels on this topic often involve whole worlds set aside as futuristic "Devil's Islands" (see this column in issue #73, page 17, for a list of books). [TV: *Hogan's Heroes* (CBS 1965-71), *Mariah* (ABC 1987), *On the Rocks* (ABC 1975-6), *The Prisoner* (CBS 1968-9), *Women in Prison* (Fox 1987-8)]

Rescuers: Paramedics, cops, firemen—saving the lives and property of those in emergency situations is a tough business and could easily form the basis for many adventures. Rescuer adventures can take place almost anywhere—the more exotic, varied, and hazardous the setting, the better. If the rescuers are based in a large city, their missions might take them out into the countryside under the city's jurisdiction.

The GM will have to be creative, since a particular location might be subject to a wide variety of disasters that will each alter the environment around them to increase local danger. For example, a peaceful river city with a pleasant climate could still be subject to auto collisions, aircraft crashes, train derailments, ship sinkings, industrial accidents, riots, lightning strikes, bridge and tunnel collapses, landslides, earthquakes, disease outbreaks, air and water pollution, etc.

Need real-world examples? Louisville, my old home town, has known massive fires, chemical plant explosions, tornados, chlorine gas clouds from wrecked barges on the Ohio River, sewer explosions, and city-wide floods (but not in the same year, thank heavens). Milwaukee, my current home town, had a 1993 outbreak of bacteria in the water supply that sickened tens of thousands. Los Angeles has had just about every disaster I can think of (often in the same year) except for nuclear blasts and tsunamis.

A British children's series using marionettes, *Thunderbirds,* was the only SF-type rescue TV show. The most unusual "mundane" rescue shows were probably *Sea Hunt* (featuring scuba divers) and *Ripcord* (featuring sky divers). [TV: *Emergency* (NBC 1972-7), *Rescue 8* (synd. 1958-9), Rescue 911 (CBS 1989-now), *Ripcord* (synd. 1961-3), *Sea Hunt* (see "Private Troubleshooters"), *Thunderbirds* (puppets, synd., n/d), *240-Robert* (ABC 1979-81)]

Romance: An SF campaign with strong role-playing elements and varied characters could include one or more powerful romantic subplots, though not as the major feature. Frustrated romance was an element in many old *Star Trek* shows, for instance—Captain Kirk & Yeoman Rand, Commander Spock & Nurse Chapel, etc. (Makes the show seem more like *The Love Boat* than you thought, doesn't it?)

The only TV show with SF elements that seemed to carry a romantic element with it as a major plot was, of course, *Beauty and the Beast.* Attempting to build a similar campaign would depend almost entirely upon the personal chemistry between the players in the game—and that is an area that I would be wise to avoid discussing in these pages. Good luck!

[TV: *Beauty and the Beast* (CBS 1987-1990), and more soap operas than I could possibly list here]

Next month, we turn off the TV set (hooray!) and look at new ways to add adventure to your campaign. See you then.

❑

slade's corners

O.K. I know I'm late on this contest, but I had to read nearly 200 magical items, and it was difficult determining which ones to keep and which ones to ... not keep. Since I've already been asked how I determined the winners, I'll tell you as well.

The first line of defense (for me and you, the kind reader) was to remove all pun items. Luckily, there were only about 35 of those. Some people just can't resist, but don't worry—I blame this all on Jean Rabe. It's all her fault.

Next, I removed the items that weren't disposable. Permanent items and stuff that benefitted the character until the end of time were mercilessly 13-filed. That took care of about half the remaining seven-inch stack of paper and envelopes.

With the qualified items left, I tried to pick items that weren't designed solely to produce large amounts of damage. (The item I call the *sword to cause 100 points of damage, curse with incurable leprosy, call greater tanar'ri at the whim of the user, and kill gods with a use of one of its 100 charges* was ritualistically recycled.) I preferred the items that were unusual or unique. After all, there are a thousand daggers, a million scrolls, a trillion staves, and a septillion swords in the AD&D® Game magic system. Thus, wallets, bedpans, buttons, vests, dog collars, and handcuffs were given a bit more leniency than others.

After all that, the remaining items were binned (so to speak), and I randomly chose eight second-place winners. I already knew who the master of this magical menagerie was, and his work was already a winner—that being John "more qualified for slade's job than slade" Pollock of North Dakota. Congrats!

In later issues, you'll find the winning items from the **Disposable Magical Item Contest** scattered like buckshot through the Newszine, so be sure not to miss a bit of the fun. ❑

Cloak of Damage Absorption

XP Value 2,500 — **GP Value** 5,000 per 10 hps

This appears to be a magical, but usually slightly worn, cloak of any kind the DM wants. The cloak begins with 20+4d20 hit points. When the person wearing the cloak suffers damage, the damage is taken from the cloak first. As the cloak absorbs the damage it becomes more and more tattered and worn until it runs out of hit points and falls apart.

John Pollock, *Contest Winner*
Cavalier, ND

Combat Rations

XP Value 500 — **GP Value** 1,000

This appears to be regular hard-tack. *Combat Rations* are magically treated to resist acid, for about three days. While being attacked by stomach acid, the rations slowly releases all the nutrition one needs for the three days they will last in the stomach. And since one's stomach does have something in it, you will not feel hungry, but pleasantly full, until the magic breaks down and the hard-tack is finally digested.

John Pollock, *Contest Winner*
Cavalier, ND

Dust to Dust

XP Value 100/dose — **GP Value** 500/dose

When this dust is sprinkled on a creature who has been knocked to zero or fewer hit points, the body crumbles away and disintegrates into dust. The dead being cannot regenerate nor be resurrected in any way.

Dust to dust is normally found in an iron jar with 2d20 doses.

John Pollock, *Contest Winner*
Cavalier, ND

Wings of the Mayfly

XP Value 700 — **GP Value** 1,200

This magical item at first appears as a cloak made of a loosely woven material. However, when it is donned, it transforms into a pair of wings like those of a damselfly or mayfly. The wearer is able to fly at 18˝ (maneuver class B). When the wings are removed, or when 24 hours pass, the wings shrivel up and are useless. If this occurs while in flight, the wearer *feather falls* until a surface is reached, whereupon the wings disappear.

David Kelman
Charles Town, WV

Instant Door Seeds

XP Value 1,000 — **GP Value** 1,500

In his early years, Elminster was captured by a group of bandits who took him to their castle and threw him into the dungeon. He happened to come up with the idea to enchant a bunch of seeds with the spell *dimension door*.

Dimension door creates a two-way door that is invisible to all but the caster and another person of the caster's choice. It can only be traversed by the caster and/or another designated person.

These seeds are activated when thrown against any hard surface. The spell takes effect, creating an escape route. The seeds come in a padded bag containing 3d10 seeds. They may be used by any class.

Anthony Marzotto
Toronto, Ontario

Copy Paper

XP Value 600 — **GP Value** 1,000

When placed on a piece of paper with non-magical writing on it, this paper copies exactly what is on the original paper. When found there will be 1d20+5 sheets of *copy paper*.

John Pollock, *Contest Winner*
Cavalier, ND

All winners received ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™ Volume 2.

Conventions

TechCon III, April 7–9 Chicago, IL—The following games will be run at the Illinois Institute of Technology, located at 3241 S. Federal Street, just off I-90/94: AD&D® game Living City, D&D® game, *Star Wars,* a sanctioned *Magic: The Gathering* tournament, and a *Puffing Billy* tournament. Also, White Wolf, FASA, and West End Games will run their games. Plus many more games. Call: (312) 567-5270 day, or (312) 775-5758 evening for information. Or send e-mail to: org-gmg@minna.acc.iit.edu.

Gold Con V, April 15 Clark, NJ—This one-day game fest will be held at the American Legion Post on Westfield Avenue. RPGA Network events include two AD&D games and two Living City scenarios. Play *Magic: The Gathering, Space Hulk, Talisman, Civilization,* and *Axis & Allies*. Write: Gold Con, 3 Foursome Drive, Marlboro, NJ 07746.

Enigmacon 8, April 22–23 Los Angeles, CA—This convention will be held at Ackerman Union on the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles. It will feature a sanctioned *Magic: The Gathering* event and RPGA® Network AD&D tournaments, in addition to game demos and special guests. Please arrive by 10:00 a.m. for registration. For more information, contact: Thuong Pham, 500 Landfair Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024. Or call: (310) 208-1722.

Cruise Con, April 27–30—The Ultimate role-playing experience awaits! Three days, three nights on Carnival's luxury liner, the *Fantasy*. 1st-Class gaming, theme scenarios, paragon-level events, Network tournaments, Living City, and much more. Visit the islands with our low-priced packages. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime convention! Guests of honor: Jean Rabe, Darwin Bromley, and Wizards of the Coast. For more information, call: (216) 673-2117.

SpringCon '95, April 28–30 Lincoln, NE—Join us for the fifth annual SpringCon. Featured events include a miniatures painting contest, *Warhammer 40K, BattleTech, Fantasy Battles,* and many others. Network-sanctioned events include *Amber,* Living City, Living Jungle, AD&D game Paragon, AD&D game Grandmasters, *Paranoia,* and others. For more info, write: SpringCon, c/o Spellbound, 16th & W, Lincoln, NE 68501.

DemiCon VI, May 5–7 Des Moines, IA—Looking for a little magic? 24-hour gaming? Come to Iowa's premier sci-fi con. Filking, masquerades, art shows, guests, Network events, and more. For information write: The Adventurers of Central Iowa, 1304 Boyd Street, Des Moines, IA 50316 or phone 515-266-2358.

Eclipse '95 May 26–28 Columbia, MO—Held at the Holiday Inn Expo Center, this convention's events include role-playing, board games, miniatures systems, and painting contest, card games, art show, and costume contest. Scheduled guests are Margaret Weis, Harold Cyle, Lester Smith, Tim Beach, and John Tibbetts. $20 onsite registration. Write to: Eclipse '95 at The Chesire Cat, 27 N. Tenth Street, Columbia MO 65201.

3-Rivers Game Fest '95 May 26–29 Pittsburgh, PA—Andon Unlimited is returning to Pittsburgh with 3-Rivers Game fest '95! This four-day convention, to be held at the Pittsburgh Greentree Marriott Hotel, will feature M:TG and other collectible card game tournaments, RPGA Network events (including Living City), a Puffing Billy Tournament by Mayfair Games, board games, miniatures, auction, and much more! Please note that this four-day convention runs over Memorial Day weekend. Pre-reg weekend badge price is $19^95. Write to Andon unlimited, 3-Rivers Game fest, P.O. Box 3100, Kent, OH 44240, or call 1 (800) 529-EXP0 (outside Ohio) or (216) 673-2117 (Ohio & International).

ConMan 003, June 2-4 Manchester, NH—This convention will be held at the Center of New Hampshire Holiday Inn, 700 Elm Street, Manchester, NH. Events include Network AD&D Game and Living City tournaments, *Top Secret, Call of Cthulhu, Torg, Cyberpunk, Paranoia, Vampire,* and more. Miniatures events include *Star Fleet Battles, Warhammer, BattleTech,* and *Car Wars.* Plus board and card games, including *Diplomacy, Axis & Allies, Illuminati, Kingmaker, Cosmic Encounter,* and *Magic: The Gathering.* Preregistration: Friday or Sunday $5, Saturday $10, weekend $18. Onsite registration: $8 Friday or Sunday, $12 Saturday, and $23 Weekend. For more information, call Jonathan or Kris at : (603) 895-1108.

CONtario, June 3–4 Toronto, ON—We are proud to present a large selection of Network events, including new Living City events, a benefit event, a masters event, and Virtual Seattle. Also featured are the Canadian AD&D Team Championship, various *Magic* tournaments, a *Vampire* interactive, and a *BattleTech* Bloodname tournament. CONtario will be held at the Triumph Howard Johnson on Keele Street (at Highway 401). Registration is $8/day or $12/weekend before April 1. For more information, write to: CONtario, 222 The Esplanade, Suite 431; Toronto, ON, Canada, M5A 4M8, or call: (416) 360-8395.

Glathricon, June 9–11 Evansville, IN—At the Executive Inn, Glathricon feature Special guests, the LIVE/WIRE interactive system, DM Guest of Honor Ed Peterson, and Guest Artist Paul Jaquays. Events include AD&D Paragon, Grandmasters, Masters, Living City, a Joe Martin Benefit, and more. For information, call (812) 477-9508, or write: Evansville Gaming Guild, P.O. Box 15414, Evansville, IN 47716.

Ben Con '95, June 23–25 Denver, CO—The first gaming convention devoted to charity! Features include an art show, games auction, seminars, dealers' room, a *Magic: The Gathering* room, RPGA Network events, a *Vampire* ball and blood drive, *Call of Cthulhu, Shadowrun, Earthdawn, M:TG* tournaments, war, board, and miniatures games, and much more! Non-gaming events, too, so bring the whole family! Margaret Weis is the guest of honor with *M:TG* artists, game designers, and a few surprise guests also in attendance. Located at the Sheraton Hotel in Lakewood, discounted room rates are available for convention-goers. Call (800) 325-3535 to reserve a room, and be sure to mention Ben Con. For additional convention info, contact: Ken Ritchart, 1024 Sagebrush Way, Louisville, CO 80027, or call (303) 665-7062. Ask about VIP registrations.

Grand Game Con '95, July 15 & 16 Grand Rapids, MI—Godfrey Lee Middle School, 1335 Lee Street, SW. We are having the following events: RPGA Network events (Living City, Living Jungle, Virtual Seattle, *Shadowrun,* AD&D Game and AD&D Masters), AD&D Game, *GURPS, BattleTech, Rifts, Magic: The Gathering* (sanctioned), *Jyhad, Star Wars, Call of Cthulhu, Shadowrun,* and much more. Doors open at 8 a.m. Events begin at 9 a.m. Admission is $8 for one day, $15 for two. For info or to judge, contact: Leon Gibbons, 13910 Olin Lakes Road, Sparta, MI 49345-9524.

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Classifieds

Convention Help: Death-Con '95 needs GMs for most RPGs, including: the AD&D® Game, RED STEEL™, *Earthdawn, Amber, Shadowrun, Shattered Dreams, Star Fleet Battles, Car Wars,* AMAZING ENGINE™, *Empire Builder,* and many board games. If you run a game not listed, contact: Death-Con '95, c/o GM Staff, P.O. Box 125, Mullica Hill, NJ 08062.

For Sale: DRAGON® Magazines. I have most issues available back to the single digits. Want lists are gladly accepted. For a current list, send a long SASE to: Michael Cox, 5017 Ravens Crest Drive, Plainsboro, NJ 08536. Or send e-mail to stackmc@aol.com.

For Sale: AD&D® 2nd Edition Game books and handbooks, FORGOTTEN REALMS® novels, modules, boxed sets, and supplements, POLYHEDRON® Newszine numbers 33, 35–44, 54, 68, 70–90, 91 (damaged), 92–103, DUNGEON® Magazines, comic books, trading cards, *Eye of the Beholder II* and *III* for the IBM PC. For a complete list and prices, send a SASE to Shaun Hardy, Rt. 1 Box 351, Caryville, FL 32427, or call (904) 548-5508.

Illinois: Looking for players and DMs for campaigning in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, AD&D 2nd Edition Game. Male or female, good attitude please. Write: James A. Smith, 439 West Washington Street, Rushville, IL 62681–1355.

New Jersey: 27-year-old gamer looking for other gamers and gaming groups in Southern Jersey. Interested specifically in AD&D 2nd Edition Game. Call Clayton at (609) 898-1726.

New York: Rochester area gamer interested in meeting other Network members from this area. I've been a member for only about a year, and I'm interested in joining a club or finding those interested in starting one. I attend conventions about every other month and enjoy the Living City. Please write to: Todd Smart, 79 East Boulevard, Rochester, NY 14610. Or call: (716) 244-8292.

Play-by-Mail: I'm looking for people interested in playing an AD&D Game adventure by mail. Most of the game takes place in the RAVENLOFT® setting. If interested, send a SASE to: Larry Lawrence Jr., 11318 Franklin Boulevard, Elk Grove, CA 95758. I'll then send you rules and other general information.

Play-by-Mail: I'm a 21-year-old gamer and am running a free play-by-mail game for several settings. Also looking for pen pals all over the world interested in writing about monsters, races, classes, and magical items. Write to: "Visions" c/o Jerry Lee Horne, Route 2 Box 620, Lakeland, GA 31635. Or call: (912) 487-5472.

Trading Cards Wanted: 1994 SPELLFIRE™ Cards: RAVENLOFT 9(3), DRAGONLANCE® 62, DRAGONLANCE Chase 4, 5, & 6. SPELLFIRE 2nd Edition 239, 262, 325, 362, and 399. First Edition 401, 403, 404, 406–408, 410, 411, 413, 414. Many cards for trade. Write: Howard Dawson, 938 Hampan Road, G.P. Woods, MI 48236. Or Call: (313) 885-0705 night, (810) 772-2020 day.

Utah: I'm a 14-year-old male player/DM looking for a gaming group in central southeastern Utah. Male or female, ages 10–adult. I play the AD&D 2nd Edition game and the D&D® Game. No experience necessary, but bringing your own dice is helpful. Game sessions can be weekly to monthly. Write: Ben Sampier, P.O. Box 435, Cleveland, UT 84518. Or call: (801) 653-2364.

Wanted To Buy: Original AD&D Game materials, especially books and modules in good condition. I'm especially interested in the (1015) World of GREYHAWK® Campaign Setting. Please send price lists to: Mark Snyder, P.O. Box 10404, Zephyr Cove, NV 89448. ❑

A Weekend in Ravens Bluff

April 1995

Join more than 2,100 players in the largest continuing adventure in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting—RAVENS BLUFF™, The Living City. Enjoy five rounds of first-run LC events over a single weekend. The same exciting new tournaments will be playing at the following conventions:

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Malcolm Wood at (519) 768-1419, P.O. Box 764, West Lorne, Ontario, Canada, N0L2P0.

Ville-Con, April 1-2 Maryville, MO
Contact Rob Nichols at (314) 874-4922, 1714 C. Amelia, Columbia, MO 65201.

A Weekend in Ravens Bluff, April 8-9 Fort Dix, NJ
Contact Don Weatherbee at (201) 316-9153, 86A Dafrack Drive, NJ 07034.

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Trella Wilhite at (803) 695-9473, 7645 Garners Fair Road, Apt #1009-F, Columbia, SC 29209.

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Contact Randall Lemon at (219) 922-7539, P.O. Box 9005, Highland, IN 46322.

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Contact Eric Kline at (808) 623-3909, P.O. Box 90182, Honolulu, HI 96835.

CAP Con, April 15-16 Columbus, OH
Contact Patrick Connolly at (614) 268-2458, 2509 Deming Avenue, Columbus, OH 43202

Con-Troll, April 22-23 Houston, TX
Contact Terry Hawkins at (713) 728-4227, 4734 Warm Springs, Houston, TX 77035.